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THE NEWSPAPER FOR MAIDSTONE, MALLING, LARKFIELD AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES

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Issue No 82

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April 8, 2009

MONEY MATTERS

Pull-out supplement on how to beat the crunch



HOSPITAL'S CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH

BOSSES at a hospital slated for poor hygiene standards after a superbug scandal are celebrating a successful clean up.

The management team brought in to turn around Maidstone Hospital after the disastrous reign of chief executive Rose Gibb launched a cleaning blitz which has lowered infection rates dramatically.



EXCLUSIVE

■ BY IAN READ

The new Care Quality Control Commission reported this week that cases of infection in the three hospitals run by Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Health Trust have dropped significantly.

And the improvement is continuing as figures released today show Clostridium Difficile cases have dropped 60 per cent, while MRSA rates fell by 30 per cent. C Diff cases

fell from 290 in 2007/08 to 75 last year, with MRSA cases dropping from 24 to 16 cases in all three hospitals.

Routinely all three hospitals deal with half a million patients a year.

A spokesman said: "The trust received a clean bill of health in this latest review of national hygiene standards throughout the NHS.

"This is due to the enormous amount of work our staff have carried out and continue to do to protect patients from avoidable infections.

"Our hospitals are cleaner and safer

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



WOOLLY GOOD FUN WITH THE LAMBS

This girl enjoyed cuddling a cute, fluffy new arrival at her school's farm.

New Line Learning Academy's farm in Loose opened its doors to allow pupils and parents to meet its newborn lambs, as well see its other animals. The youngsters were able to hold the lambs and have their photos taken on the day, which raised money to keep the farm going.

FULL STORY + PICTURE SPREAD ON SCHOOLS PAGE 12.

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3 Members of The Royal Sussex living history regiment at Folkestone's Shorncliffe Barracks. **Search 'history'**

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Picture: PHIL HOUGHTON

DEADLINE LOOMS: If approved the development would be on countryside near Bearsted

Council set a date for their KIG decision

■ BY JON COATES

A DATE has been set for Maidstone council's planning committee meeting to consider the Kent International Gateway proposals.

The committee will formally consider the planning application for a giant road-rail freight depot on countryside near Bearsted on Thursday, May 7.

Despite an appeal by the developer for the application to go straight to a public inquiry being approved in February, the council will still decide how it would have ruled to finalise its Statement of Case.

The meeting will take place at the Maidstone Studios in New Cut Road at 6pm.

The council's director of prosperity and regeneration Alison Broom said: "The venue for the planning committee meeting has been chosen to accommodate as many people as possible to hear the debate and the meeting will be webcast live on the council's website."

Residents still have until May 29

to send their comments to The Planning Inspectorate before the inquiry is held.

When the appeal was validated by the Planning Inspectorate on February 23, Maidstone council was given six weeks until April 6 to submit a written statement setting out its case. This has been extended to May 29.

All responses that have been made on the application up to now have already been forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate and the appellant.

Any further comments need to be submitted directly to the Planning Inspectorate by sending three copies, quoting the appeal reference number APP/U2235/A/09/2096565, to ROOM 4/04 KITE, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN. Responses must arrive by no later than May 29.

There is no need to send copies to the council as it will receive the comments from the Planning Inspectorate.

Housing and Planning Minister Margaret Beckett will make the final decision on the KIG application after the inquiry, after calling in the matter due to its high profile and impact.

yourmaidstone NEWS IN BRIEF

Pair held in custody ready for court date

TWO men charged with attempted murder following an incident in Lockmeadow appeared at Maidstone Magistrates Court on Friday.

Nicholas Garcia, 24, and Earl Williams, 25, both from Hackney, east London, were remanded in custody to appear at Maidstone Crown Court to face three counts of attempted murder on April 15. Another man, Adibala Alimi, 18, also from Hackney, has already been remanded in custody until the same date.

A 20-year-old woman involved in the incident on March 27, where three men were stabbed, has been bailed until April 29.

The injured men were taken to hospital but released after treatment.

Museum continues to draw bigger crowds

STAFF at Maidstone Museum are celebrating because more people are coming through their doors than ever.

And they have been given a cash boost so their Japanese collection can be displayed better.

Last year 69,825 took a look at the collections – a 5.5 per cent rise on the previous year.

The museum in St Faith's Street received a £5,700 government grant, which will allow it to complete a photographic catalogue of its Japanese collection and four reference books.

Olympic dreams are in site for athletes

AN OLYMPIC sponsorship website has been set up to help push Maidstone athletes on to glory in the London 2012 Games.

The site – Maidstonesdream.co.uk – aims to bring together aspiring athletes and sports teams with businesses across the borough. It will go live later this month.

Maidstone council's cabinet member for leisure Brian Moss said: "Maidstonesdream.co.uk has been created to help talented athletes achieve the ultimate goal of being part of Team GB in 2012."

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Tuning into history as choir tour the Vatican

Founding document returned to school

■ BY CHRIS MURPHY

IT HAS been a big week for the staff and students at Sutton Valence School.

Its choir raised the roof at the Vatican in Rome and the school founder's original parchment from the 16th century was handed back.

The 46 pupils, aged 12-18, escorted by eight members of staff, sang for priests and visitors at the Vatican during a six-day tour of some of the city's most prestigious venues.

They started at the Pantheon last week, and then it was on to St Mary's Maggiore and St Peter's Basilica, in the Vatican, as well as in the catacombs of Southern Rome.

The tour was arranged by Sutton Valence School's director of music Phil Horley, following a highly successful tour to Verona in 2002.

He said: "The classical background of Rome is a perfect setting for this wonderful choral music and it should give the choir a great experience, as well as confidence in performing in front of a much wider audience than usual."

As well as singing their hearts out, the students also visited the Colosseum and the harbour in Anzio, site of the famous Allied amphibian landings during the Second World War.

Meanwhile, a handwritten parchment, dated



RELIGION AND HISTORY: While the choir tour the Vatican, school archivist David Pickard looks over the parchment

April 12, 1580, and signed by William Lambe, the founder of Sutton Valence School and a trusted friend of King Henry VIII, was handed back to the school for its archives by the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers.

William Lambe, who lived near the school at Chart Sutton, was originally a chorister at the Court of King Henry, before later becoming a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and making his fortune in the wool trade and land ownership.

He became Master of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers, and founded the school in 1576 for the sons of clothworkers.

The school's archivist David Pickard said: "This is a wonderful acquisition. The parch-

ment is in excellent condition, clearly readable, and bears William Lambe's signature."

The document is an indenture, pledging the school would continue to be maintained and run by the Worshipful Company after Lambe's death, which happened just months later. The clothworkers owned the school until 1910, when it was sold to the United Westminster Foundation, a charity maintaining independent schools.

Today, Sutton Valence is a flourishing school with 580 pupils, much-expanded from the site occupied by William Lambe's original grammar school, and with an associated 380-pupil preparatory school.

Patient safety the 'number one priority'

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE
as a result and we now have some of the lowest infection rates in the South East.

"Even one patient catching an avoidable infection in hospital is one too many and patient safety will continue to be our number one priority this year and every year."

A government inquiry found 90 deaths from C Diff at the three hospitals could be attributed to management failings and a lack of infection control during the Rose Gibb regime.

The new team ordered a thorough deep clean at Maidstone, Kent and Sussex and Pembury hospitals and implemented better infection controls.

But neighbouring Medway NHS Health Trust has failed to meet the new standards and its practices are under the microscope.

Commission chairman Barbara Young said rigorous controls will be placed on Medway Hospital and the performance monitored.

As part of the Clean Hands campaign KOS Media has been working with the NHS to drive home the message that washing your hands stops the spread of superbugs like C Diff, MRSA and winter vomiting bug Norovirus.

Child abuse picture haul largest find of its kind in county

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

PAEDOPHILE Mark Middleton has been jailed for 16 months after being caught with more than 125,000 indecent images of children – one of the biggest hauls ever recovered by Kent police.

Middleton, 52, of Hunton, near Maidstone, was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court on Friday.

He had previously pleaded guilty to eight offences of making and possessing indecent images of children.

Detective Sergeant Dave Shipley said: "This is one of the largest recoveries of child abuse images by Kent police. Every image represents a child being subject to sexual abuse."

"Kent police will always work hard to bring to justice those offenders that encourage child abuse by creating a market for the images."



BEHIND BARS: Mark Middleton

The judge placed Middleton on the sex offenders' register for ten years and disqualified him from working with children.

Primary hits the bottom of league

OAK Trees Community School in Maidstone has been named as the joint worst primary school in the country – with not one pupil hitting the minimum standards in both English and maths.

The school's zero per cent attainment in the tests sat by ten and 11-year-olds saw it placed at the very bottom of the nationwide school league table alongside Crays Hill in Billericay, Essex.

Both schools' dismal results were mirrored in the more traditional measure of core subjects – English, maths and science – with Crays Hill the worst-performing in the country and Oak Trees second worst.

Yourmaidstone approached Oak Trees for a comment but were directed to Kent County Council as the education authority. The council spokesman said a new headteacher and governing body had made significant improvements since last year's tests.

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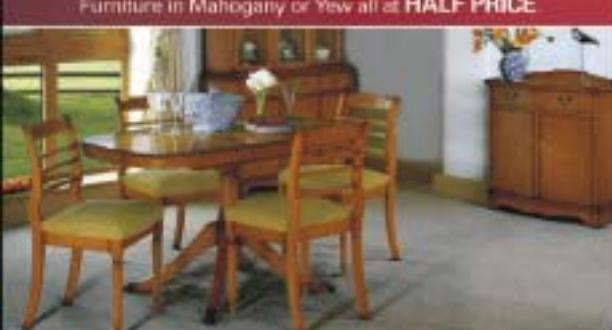
The Apprentice's Mona Lewis at 20 20 Vision. Search 'vision'.

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Oakwood grammar boys stage classic Sixties play

FIFTY-two young actors delighted their audience when they performed a theatrical chronicle of World War One.

Oakwood Park Grammar pupils staged Oh! What a Lovely War in front of friends, family and Mayor of Maidstone Cllr Denise Joy. The play, written in the 1960s, is seen as a modern classic. School head of drama Josephine Lane directed and an original score, composed by Dr John Watson, was played by the school's brass band.

District ranked alongside best for housing advice

RESIDENTS concerned about becoming homeless during the recession can rest assured they are in safe hands.

In the latest figures, Maidstone council has been ranked in the top quarter nationally for the number of households prevented from becoming homeless in 2008-09.

Cabinet member Cllr Malcolm Greer said: "This is a real achievement and means that through our advice and intervention we are in the top 25 per cent of district councils."

Rogue traders warning by Trading Standards

TRADING Standards officers have issued a warning about a pair of cold-calling rogue traders after complaints from homeowners in Maidstone and Cranbrook.

Two men have been offering gutter cleaning services for prices as low as £25, but raise their prices considerably after offering to fix damage to the roof they claim to have found while cleaning.

Residents are urged to contact Consumer Direct on 0845 040506 if they are approached by the men.

Power tools go missing after garage is raided

A SELECTION of power tools was taken during a burglary in West Malling.

The tools, which were stored in the garage of a home in Ewell Avenue, went missing on the evening of Monday, March 23.

Police say a door was forced to gain access. Officers are asking anyone with information to contact them on 01732 379217, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111, or email appeals.westkent@kent.police.uk.



For information and advice on travelling in Kent and for all our traffic regulation orders, please see the Saturday Observer or the Kent on Sunday or visit our website at www.kent.gov.uk/highways

'Marvellous response' to bin the bag launch

■ BY IAN READ

SHOPPERS have embraced a bid to rid the town centre of plastic bags.

The official launch of the Bin the Bag campaign last Wednesday saw hundreds of people do their bit to save the planet by swapping plastic bags for paper carriers.

In just 90 minutes during lunchtime, town centre manager Bill Moss and his team were able to fill a skip with handed in plastic bags, which will be sent for recycling.

Mr Moss said: "We had a marvellous response from the public. It was uplifting to see people walking around with our paper carrier bags."

He admits the campaign will never eradicate the scourge of excessive packaging, but believes it is making a contribution.

He said: "We have been trying to drum home the message that people don't need to use so much packaging or carrier bags."

"If you've got a bag on you, there's no need to take another one, or you could ask the shopkeeper if you need the item wrapped or not. It's so simple."

The Bin the Bag campaign, the brainchild of Maidstone Town Centre Management and local law firm Brachers, was launched during the busiest shopping day of the year so far.

Claire Foreman, a student at the School of Dance in Medway, donned a dress covered in



IN THE BIN: The Bag Lady helps town centre manager Bill Moss and staff get the message across to shoppers

plastic bags and packaging – dubbed The Bag Lady – to meet shoppers and explain the aims of the campaign.

Mr Moss said: "We have been out in the town with our Bag Lady, who has been collecting plastic bags and replacing them with paper

versions. She met lunchtime shoppers and reminded them of our aim to bin the bag."

Initially campaigners hope to reduce plastic bag use by ten per cent in the county town.

This would prevent at least 400,000 bags a year being sent to landfill.

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New name, new look, new life

A VISITOR attraction was relaunched last weekend after a £500,000 transformation.

Despite the economic downturn Kent Life in Sandling, formerly known as the Museum of Kent Life, has undergone a makeover to tempt visitors for the start of the new season.

At its reopening on Saturday, visitors discovered new indoor and outdoor play areas, a coffee bar, refurbished tea room and other additions, such as piglet and ferret racing.

Children were able to enjoy a more interactive visit in the new Cuddle Corner, getting up close and personal with small animals such as guinea pigs and rabbits. Kent Life director John Jordan

revealed the changes were prompted by research among the museum's visitors.

"For the last 20 years, we've been marketed as the Museum of Kent Life, but research showed that the word museum was confusing people," he said.

"Visitors didn't appreciate they were coming to a heritage farm with lots of outdoor things to do and children don't really like to go to museums."

"The second thing was that people were saying they wanted to have fun things to do with the children."

"So we decided to have an extended closure after last November's Cobtree Country Fair."

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BOLD MOVE: Theo Paphitis with Helen Grant at the launch of the Maidstone and Weald Business Forum

Dragon warms to his theme at forum launch

RECESSION can breed success for bold entrepreneurs, says Dragons' Den star Theo Paphitis.

He came to the county town to talk to 150 local businessmen and politicians at the launch of the Maidstone and Weald Business Forum.

Mr Paphitis, who made an unsuccessful attempt to keep Woolworths operating, says sharp businessmen should look out for the chance to fill a gap in the market.

The former Millwall FC chairman, who runs the Ryman stationery chain, said: "There are opportunities out there for the taking. Many companies are not going bust because of the recession. Their downfall is often due to other factors, such as over capacity in the market or poor management."

"For every firm that goes bust there is a customer list looking for a new supplier."

The forum is the brainchild of Helen Grant, the Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate for Maidstone and the Weald, who is a lawyer and businesswoman.

She believes the forum, which met for the

■ BY IAN READ

first time on Tuesday evening last week, can be a crucial link between business, local government and the shadow cabinet.

The Tory frontbench was represented by industry spokesman Eric Pickles. Mrs Grant claims Labour's front bench lacks business experience and doesn't understand the problems faced by small businesses.

She said: "There aren't enough ministers who have firsthand experience of creating wealth."

Mrs Grant said: "I am delighted with the feedback the forum has received. I am sure the forum will deliver some great ideas for business as it develops."

Tough-talking Mr Paphitis has become a household name since joining the panel of popular BBC Two show Dragons' Den.

The show sees budding entrepreneurs offer a share of their business in return for funding and input from one of the five dragons, who are all successful operators in their chosen fields of business.

Following in dad's Ben Nevis footsteps

A BROTHER and sister have vowed to follow in their sick father's footsteps and climb Britain's highest mountain to raise funds for charity.

Laura Axton, 24, from Eccles, will scale Ben Nevis in Scotland with her brother James, fiancé Shaun Gravenell, and friends Julie Elliot and Vicki Record, in aid of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

Ms Axton will tackle the 4,406ft mountain to raise money for the charity because her father, Peter, has the disease.

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is the UK's most common life-threatening inherited disease and claims about three victims every week.

It is caused by a single defective gene, which leads to the formation of a sticky mucus which clogs the internal organs, especially the lungs and digestive system.

This causes chronic infections and inflammation in the lungs, and creates difficulty in digesting food.

Miss Axton, a radiographer, said: "My dad has had a constant battle with CF over the years but is now 47 and still going strong."

"He also climbed Ben Nevis when he was younger, so he is helping me plan my training and providing support."

To sponsor Miss Axton and her team visit www.justgiving.com/lauraaxton.

yourmaidstone NEWS IN BRIEF

Hospice's starlight stroll

WOMEN are being urged to clear their diaries on American Independence Day to take part in a ten-mile night walk.

The Heart of Kent Hospice will host its third annual Moonlit Walk on Saturday, July 4, and is inviting women of all ages to take part.

The circular walk starts from Kings Hill and attracts thousands of entrants every year to help raise funds for the hospice, based in Aylesford.

Last year's walk was started by Maidstone and Weald MP Ann Widdecombe, with ITV Meridian newsreader Sangeeta Bhabra performing the task in 2007.

This year the theme is Night of a Thousand Stars. The walk will start at 10pm from the David Lloyd centre, Kings Hill. For more information visit www.moonlitwalk.org, call the hospice's fundraising team on 01622 790195, or email enquiries@moonlitwalk.org.

Park power lines buried

OVERHEAD power lines are being taken down to enhance two beauty spots.

Engineers are carrying out the work at Cobham Park, near Rochester, and White Horse Wood Country Park, near Maidstone, replacing the lines with underground cables.

EDF Energy Networks is spending £180,000 on the project.

Nigel Collier of EDF said: "We are delighted to be providing the technical expertise behind these two projects."

The removal of the lines will improve the views in and around both parks."

Underage drinkers blitz

POLICE will crack down on underage drinking this summer with a new neighbourhood operation.

Officers patrolling Borough Green and Snodland will be targeting anyone under 18 seen drinking alcohol, as well as adults who buy alcohol for underage drinkers. Anyone caught buying booze for youngsters will be given an £80 fixed penalty ticket.

Sgt Kevin Brigden said: "Residents feel underage drinking is causing antisocial behaviour."

We will be running this operation throughout the summer."

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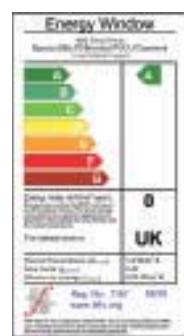
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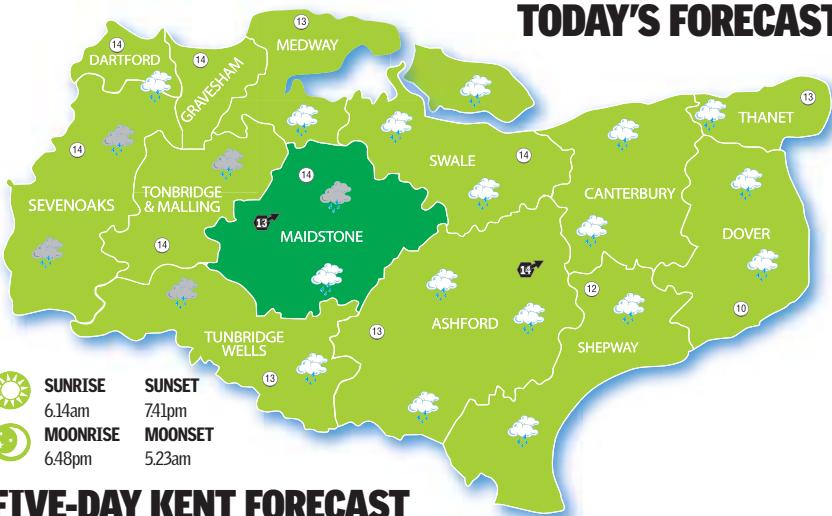
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WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	2:48pm	6.1m
	Sunday	3:21pm	6.0m
Dover	Saturday	1:03pm	6.5m
	Sunday	1:37pm	6.5m
Dungeness	Saturday	1:02pm	7.7m
	Sunday	1:36pm	7.5m
Ramsgate	Saturday	1:33pm	5.0m
	Sunday	2:07pm	4.9m
Sheerness	Saturday	2:38pm	5.8m
	Sunday	3:11pm	5.7m
Whitstable	Saturday	2:54pm	5.2m
	Sunday	3:25pm	5.1m

FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon		Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	13°C	13°C	13°C	13°C	12°C	Gravesend	13°C	14°C	13°C	13°C	13°C
Canterbury	12°C	12°C	14°C	12°C	12°C	Maidstone	13°C	13°C	14°C	13°C	13°C
Chatham	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Ramsgate	12°C	12°C	14°C	12°C	12°C
Dartford	13°C	14°C	13°C	13°C	13°C	Rochester	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C
Dover	10°C	11°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Sevenoaks	11°C	12°C	12°C	11°C	11°C
Faversham	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Sittingbourne	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C
Folkestone	10°C	11°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Tonbridge	13°C	13°C	13°C	12°C	12°C
Gillingham	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Tun Wells	13°C	13°C	13°C	12°C	12°C



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	16°C	Madrid	22°C
Athens	11°C	New York	14°C
Barcelona	16°C	Paris	19°C
Beijing	26°C	Rome	17°C
Bombay	36°C	Sydney	19°C
Cape Town	21°C	Tenerife	22°C
Cardiff	11°C	Tokyo	18°C
Gibraltar	17°C	Vancouver	12°C
Hong Kong	19°C	Warsaw	14°C
Las Palmas	22°C	Wellington	18°C

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KENT ON SATURDAY

KOS Media is proud to announce the addition of Kent on Saturday to its award-winning series of newspapers.

Incorporating all the best aspects of our existing Kentish Saturday Observer, this exciting new publication will cover all the biggest news and sports stories of the week and reach more readers than ever before.

At a time when other local newspaper groups are being forced to cut back on staff and resources, the birth of Kent on Saturday demonstrates that KOS Media, the publisher of this paper, is still thriving despite the economic climate.

Managing director Paul Stannard said: "This is another exciting development for us at KOS Media following the launch of our two new YourLocal papers in Deal and Sandwich last month, which demonstrates our commitment to delivering hard-hitting news throughout the county.

Delivery

"Kent on Saturday will sit as an equal to our award-winning Kent on Sunday publication and act as the perfect start to the weekend."

Readers will be able to get their hands on a copy of the free paper from next weekend, with the number of available copies being significantly higher than was offered by the Kentish Saturday Observer.

Kent on Saturday will be available from all good newsagents and retail outlets from this Saturday. Alternatively, you can go green by reading it free on screen at www.kentnews.co.uk.

Meanwhile, KOS Media is running a new promotion to offer free delivery of its weekend papers to selected homes. To find out more visit www.kentnews.co.uk/free.

yourlocalinterview

QUESTION & ANSWER

IAN WESSON



Q & A

The advanced skills teacher for science at Invicta Grammar School spoke to **Anna White** about what is being done to persuade young people that the subject is not boring to ensure we have scientists for the future

Q Can you tell us a little about yourself?

A I am originally from south London and I moved to Kent a few years ago after securing a head of year and head of chemistry post in Maidstone. I'm 41 and live with my wife Mandy, and our two young children in Chatham, where I worked up until recently as a DJ for ten years. I had other jobs before teaching, including baker, hod carrier and emergency service co-ordinator.

Q Tell us about your role as science advanced skills teacher at Invicta Grammar School?

A It's a very rewarding role and one which I consider a privilege, as it involves supporting colleagues in developing expertise and translating it into outstanding classroom practice.

Q What is your involvement with the recently launched Growing Scientist Project?

A I am on the steering committee for the project whose overriding aim is to increase interest in and uptake of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) for career choices and further study.

Q Can you tell us a bit more about the project?

A Ministers, as well as industry bosses, recognise the importance of STEM subjects for the future economic well-being of the country. They have called for more emphasis to be placed on

encouraging youngsters to study STEM subjects at a higher level. With that in mind we've developed a programme of captivating events which will hopefully see numbers of students opting for science-related careers rocket.

Q Which Maidstone schools are involved?

A As well as Invicta Grammar, Maidstone Grammar, Maidstone Girls' Grammar, Maplesden Noakes, Oakwood Park Grammar, St Simon Stock, Astor of Hever and Sutton Valence, are collaborating on the project.

Q What sort of events has it included so far?

A Between November and January six space camps were held involving 1,300 students from the eight schools. The camps saw students build solar-powered rovers, egg parachutes, gliders, kites and rockets, which they launched. They were treated to two professional rocket launches and the highlight for many was the ride in the space mountain simulator.

Q What events are being planned in the future?

A The space camps paved the way for a programme of more specialised sessions which are being offered to students in Year 8 for after Easter. These sessions will enable students to explore further and develop ideas from the space camp. On the agenda is the launch of Big

Mama', the biggest rocket ever launched by a Kent school. Other items include space robotics, advanced propulsion, space supplements, Martian mummies and chemical rocketry.

Q How have the children reacted to the Science Week and the events?

A There has been a real buzz about the place over the last few months. National Science and Engineering week in March saw students making bouncy custard balls, dissecting rats and competing in a scientific University Challenge on Red Nose Day.

Q Which of the events or tasks has proved to be the most popular with the students?

A Dissecting rats was so popular we had to run an extra session. It was probably the influx of would-be vets and doctors through the door.

Q Why do you think less students are choosing careers in the science sector?

A Is it the demands of the discipline? Is it the attraction of the arts? Is it the tedium of the curriculum? Studies have shown that it involves a number of these factors and more. I believe youngsters have been carried along by the swell of a misguided public perception that science is boring and irrelevant. Science should be celebrated and enjoyed by everyone. It can be used, after all, to measure the progress made by civilisation in continuing to discover the wonderful world we live in.

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5. EASTER HUNTS
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6. Family Films
at Showcase Cinema in the Water Circus



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A guide to what's on offer at Gurkha Music Festival. Search 'Gurkha'



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Police launch Safer Spring campaign to stop nuisance crime. Search 'safer'

EDITOR'S CHOICE

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'Bankers who sparked crisis deserve prison'

LEADING journalist and broadcaster Andrew Neil has lashed out at a business conference at the banks that sparked the economic crisis.

He told delegates at the Kent 2020 Vision business exhibition that he would like to see some bankers go jail – but that would probably happen in the US rather than here.

Mr Neil, a former Sunday Times editor who is now chief of Press Holdings and owner of The Spectator, said the problem was not lack of banking regulation but failure to implement existing rules.

He said: "I do think everyone was complicit in this. The banks are clearly the number one villain, but everyone looked the other way.

"I don't think the banks should be regulated to hell, but I would like to see some of them suffer," he said.

■ BY TONY PATEY

"I would like to see the handcuffs on some of the bankers because I think they have broken the law and I do think they deserve to go to jail."

"I think that will happen in America, although I would hope to think in this country as well – but I do look forward to it happening in the US."

Kent County Council leader Paul Carter told the conference that plans would be unveiled this year aimed at boosting the number of youngsters taking up apprenticeships in Kent.

The proposals should increase the number of apprentices from about 2,000 to 8,000 within a few years.

More than 3,000 business people attended the fourth annual 2020 Vision event at the County Showground, Detling, on Thursday.



ANDREW NEIL: Angered by banks' role in credit crunch

World leaders given a taste of Kent's finest

WORLD leaders in London for the G20 summit were served a 'best of British' dinner that included vegetables from the Garden of England.

US president Barack Obama, French president Nicolas Sarkozy and other leaders of the 20 richest countries in the world sat down together for a meal cooked by Jamie Oliver at Downing Street on Wednesday last week.

The party tucked into a starter of organic Scottish salmon served with samphire and sea

kale, with a selection of vegetables from Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

For the main course, slow-roasted shoulder of lamb from a hill farm in Wales was served with Jersey Royal potatoes, wild mushrooms and mint sauce.

Dessert was a classic comfort food of Bakewell tart and custard.

As the leaders debated the benefits of fiscal stimulus, their spouses enjoyed a more relaxed dinner hosted by Sarah Brown with celebrity

guests from the worlds of fashion, sports, business and the arts.

Olympic gold-medallist Dame Kelly Holmes, from Tonbridge, was seated next to Michelle Obama. On the other side of the First Lady was Harry Potter author JK Rowling.

The G20 summit saw the leaders come together at the Excel centre in London's Docklands on Thursday to agree measures to tackle the worst global financial crisis since the 1930s.

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Mulberry Tree's deep local roots

FLIPPING over a menu in a restaurant today is rarely an eye-opening experience.

Maybe it will have the desserts ... or perhaps simply a heavy hint to leave a tip if you believe the service has been up to scratch. Some, simply a splodge of someone else's leftovers. Yet for one restaurant in a pretty village just outside Maidstone, it has turned it into an opportunity to underline its Kentish credentials.

Because at the award-winning Mulberry Tree in Boughton Monchelsea, owners list the suppliers of all the main ingredients.

It is a transparency which has proved a big hit for the restaurant and played a role in it scooping the prestigious restaurant of the year title in the Taste of Kent awards at Leeds Castle in February.

The Produced in Kent-backed awards reward those who support local suppliers and producers. Putting the source of the food in the diners' face proved a shrewd move.

Karen Williams, the owner of the Mulberry Tree, said: "It works in two ways. It's great advertising for them, but it keeps them on their toes, too. For example – and not that it's ever happened – but if someone is eating a piece of meat they don't think comes up to scratch, the supplier's name is on the menu so they are named and shamed.

"It's quite an unusual thing to do and we get an awful lot of comments about it."

Today, nearly two years in, it has bucked the trend as its revenues increase in what is traditionally one of the slowest periods of the year. And with both her mother and daughter involved in the day-to-day running, it is very much a personal, family-run business.

Yet it is the food which puts this hidden treasure in the spotlight.

In a perfect fit with our campaign of urging our readers to demand locally produced and sourced food and drink – spearheaded by our www.foodforkent.co.uk website – it is a vision embraced wholeheartedly by the Mulberry Tree. And it takes a need to 'go



BUY LOCAL: Karen Williams, owner of the Mulberry Tree restaurant at Boughton Monchelsea, names her local suppliers on the menu

local' very seriously. All its meat comes from nearby Cranbrook – the beef from the Angley School farm and the venison from Staplehurst. Wild mushrooms are foraged locally by an expert and the fish is chosen fresh from the catch of the day by crews in Hythe. Even the flour for the freshly-made and baked bread is local. It has even secured

the once thought impossible and put together an entirely Kentish cheeseboard.

The owner adds: "Sourcing local is the way forward. Life changes and we evolve with it. By doing this we're championing the little people. I've always dealt with local suppliers – not as consciously as I do now – but it is important to me.

"We are a little person. An independent. We have to fight hard to survive. Spending locally is vital.

"Campaigns such as yours are tapping into a real shift right now. It's like cutting down on using carrier bags. Now when I go shopping I consciously make an effort to buy seasonal, local, food."

Delicious Easter Kentish feast delivered to your door

WHAT better way to celebrate Easter this year than sitting down to a delicious feast of Kent food and drink?

And by shopping at www.foodforkent.co.uk you can do just that. We have teamed up with the top producers from across the county to allow you to order up a tasty Easter for your friends and family.

Our one-stop online shop makes buying local easy – just browse the huge range and select your delivery window. Before you know it, it will be delivered straight to your door.

This week, we have Easter lamb, reared in Ash, near Canterbury. It comes from one of the oldest breeds in the world, The Romney – sometimes referred to as The Kent – producing consistent quality for centuries. And at £17.25 per leg you can save £2.73 on Sainsbury's prices of Welsh lamb.

We're also working closely with Griggs of Hythe to bring you some fabulous local fish while being kind to your pocket. There is 10 per cent off all our prices until Good Friday. You



can make savings compared to all the major supermarkets and be comfortable in the knowledge that your fish has come straight from the English Channel.

It's spring too, and this means lots of fresh local vegetables

and salads coming into season to arrive with you the day after they were picked and with minimal environmental impact. So have a happy Easter with www.foodforkent.co.uk.

Coming into season this week:

- Spring greens
- Spring lamb
- Dover sole
- Red mullet



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BREAK TIME



IN HARMONY: Pamela, Antonia, Isabella, Imogen and Rebecca at the Baughan Theatre

A delightful debut

PUPILS gave a "polished performance" when they took to the stage and put on a comedy show for their parents.

Third year youngsters from Sutton Valence Prep School made their debut by performing a series of comedy poems by children's author Allan Ahlberg.

The poems, some set to music, were taken from Ahlberg's books *Please Mrs Butler* and *Heard it in the Playground*.

Every youngster had a speaking part in the two-day production staged at the senior school's Baughan Theatre, which was opened in 2007 by Dame Judi Dench.

This was the first time pupils from the prep school has taken to its stage.

Producer Ginny Davies said: "This lively and amusing production lent itself perfectly to the Baughan and the children gave a confident and well-polished performance."

Prep school head Craig Gibbs said: "Drama has a strong tradition at Sutton Valence and we encourage it among our pupils from a very young age.

"Acting and performing sit alongside our academic studies as part of our wider curriculum and increases pupils' confidence, as well as nurturing their imagination and creativity."



FARMING WORLD: Donkey petting, face painting and the new arrival lambs were among the attractions enjoyed by all at the New Line Learning Academy lambing day

All creatures great and small



■ BY ANNA WHITE

HUNDREDS of pupils and their parents attended a school's annual lambing day to meet and greet the newest residents of its farm.

The New Line Learning Academy, in Loose, hosted the event to give the school community the chance to pet the newborn lambs.

Many youngsters had their photo-

graphs taken with the cuddly newcomers. Visitors were also able to view cows, chickens, donkeys, pigs, a pony, ducks, rabbits and a cat.

There was a display of wool being spun on a traditional wheel, craft stalls, face-painting, games, and plenty of refreshments and ice cream.

The event was organised by New Line Learning Young Farmers' Club, who give up their time at weekends – and before and after school – to look after and care for the animals.

All money raised by lambing day goes to the upkeep of the school farm.

SEND your schools news and pictures to yourmaidstone@kosmedia.co.uk. You can also upload your video clips of schools events on to www.yourkenttv.co.uk

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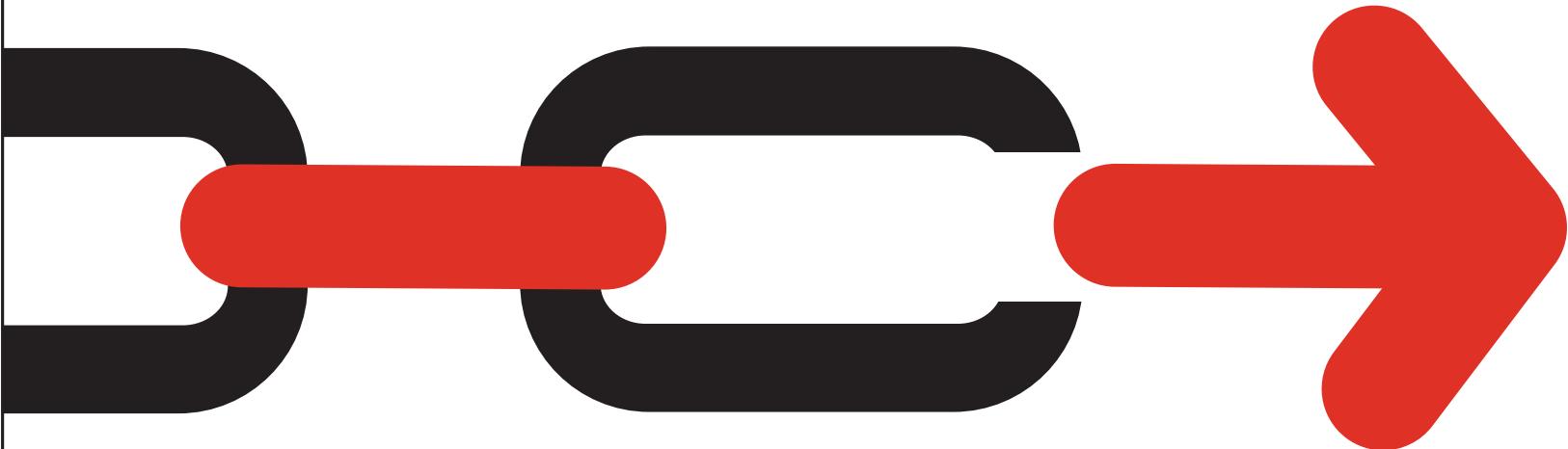
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Why adding an extra dimension is spoilt by zero specs-appeal

IF YOU listen to some industry experts, the future for technology is likely to be leaping out and biting us on the nose before too long. Almost literally.

Because 3D is back for the 21st century and, it seems, rather than pure novelty, it could actually become a vital ingredient in the way we consume entertainment media over the coming years.

Already there are some big names looking to bring some stand-out action to the big screen.

Steven Spielberg, a man with a fine history in generating a few bob for hungry film studios, is working on 3D movies, and George Lucas has long been rumoured to be working on transforming the Star Wars flicks into 3D, too.

Which, if nothing else, would at least allow everyone to punch Jar Jar Binks on the nose when his face looms out of the screen.

Video games would appear to be embracing it, too. Rumours have long circulated that the next generation of consoles may come complete with games capable of adding that all-important extra dimension.

The question is, will it really work? And the answer is probably only briefly.

There comes a point where consumers are fed up having to upgrade their equipment to accommodate the latest technological breakthrough.

First we had CDs replacing vinyl and tape. Then it was MP3. Televisions were once fat. Now they're flat. And high definition, too. And let's not get started on the great digital switchover.

But the biggest stumbling block, above and beyond all the technical upgrades will be perhaps the simplest piece of gadgetry ... the humble 3D glasses.

Those of a certain age will remember a time in the early Eighties when there was a brief flurry of excitement over 3D. There were some

shows on TV and Jaws 3 became Jaws 3D. The only problem was having to wear these horrible glasses with red and green sweet wrappers (so it seemed) for lenses.

Don't get me wrong, the effects were impressive. And watching Jaws 3 now is most amusing as severed limbs float pointlessly in the middle of the screen for far too long. Trust me, you had to be there. It did once float out and settle in your popcorn.

No-one liked wearing the glasses then, and no-one will really like wearing glasses again. And why would you?

They looked ridiculous. So let's not hear talk of how we must all brace ourselves to buy 3D enabled TVs or what have you.

We all have 3D eyes – and that's good enough for me.

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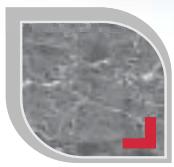
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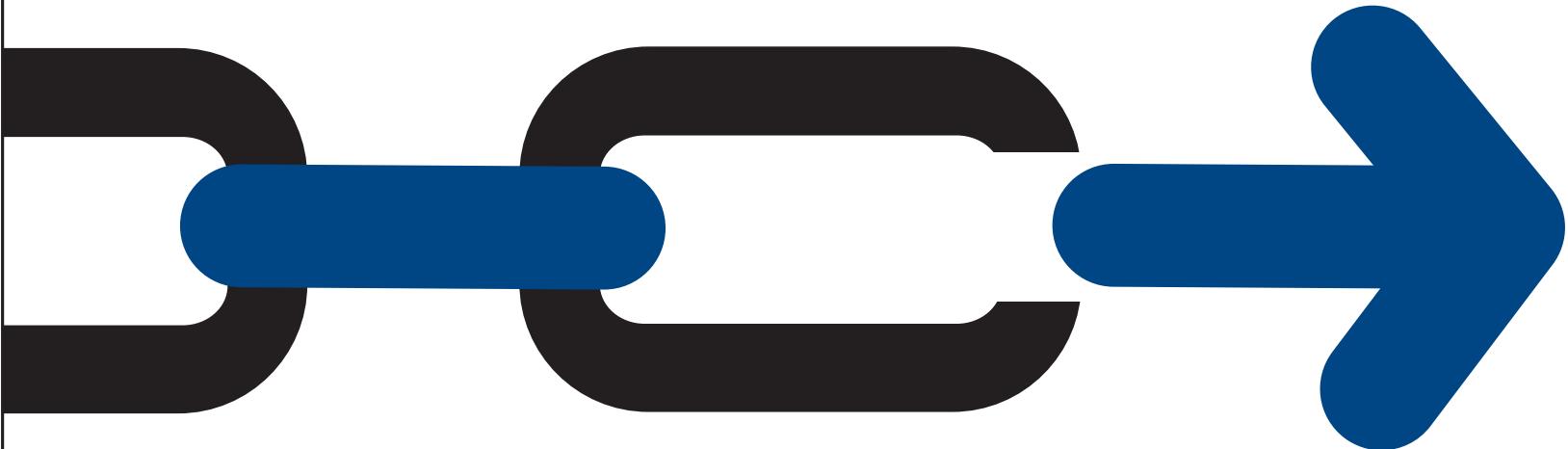
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Credit crunch unplugs Red List Live festival

THIS global recession has to be stopped.

First it brings the world's banks to their knees, and then it goes after the housing market and sends unemployment levels rocketing.

And now the all-consuming credit crunch has hit Kent's music festivals, with Red List Live postponing this summer's inaugural event until 2010. Something needs to be done.

Red List announced the postponement on Wednesday April 1 – prompting festival fans to dismiss the news as some sort of April Fool's

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

publicity stunt. But a spokesman soon said: "We are deeply saddened to announce that Red List has taken the tough decision to postpone our first festival until 2010.

"This is due to a number of factors, including the high risk of holding an event in the current economic climate, and the impact of increased capacity at established local festivals such as The Hop Farm.

"We took the decision at this early stage,

before final acts were booked, full promotion began, and site work undertaken in order to protect Red List Live's ability to host live events in the future.

"Red List Live still plans to hold a series of smaller events this summer, with some of the bands already booked, before returning as a festival next year as part of our five-year plan.

"All ticket holders have been fully refunded, and as a thank you for their support will be invited, free of charge to one of our upcoming events."

Fellow Kent music festival organisers said

they were shocked by Red List's postponement but said the market had become saturated in recent years.

Louge on the Farm's Matt Gough said: "It's definitely a more competitive market than it was when we started in 2006. Outdoor events seem to be something of a fashion. But it's healthy competition. Making sure what you do is unique, interesting and fun will see you good."

Sellindge Music Festival's Ben Wells added: "The festival market has become increasingly competitive over the last few years not only in Kent, but throughout the country.

"This fact alone makes the task of selling tickets more and more difficult. Put that saturated level of public choice into the context of a global recession and there's no wonder many events are struggling."

Both festivals played down the effect Red List's cancellation will have on their ticket sales but said they were looking forward to the summer.

LOTF's Matt Gough said: "Ultimately what's happened with Red List Live is a shame as it can have a bit of a negative effect on the Kent festival scene – it certainly doesn't fill people with confidence. But I think there's an excellent offering of live music in the county this summer and I'm sure we're all in for a very enjoyable time."

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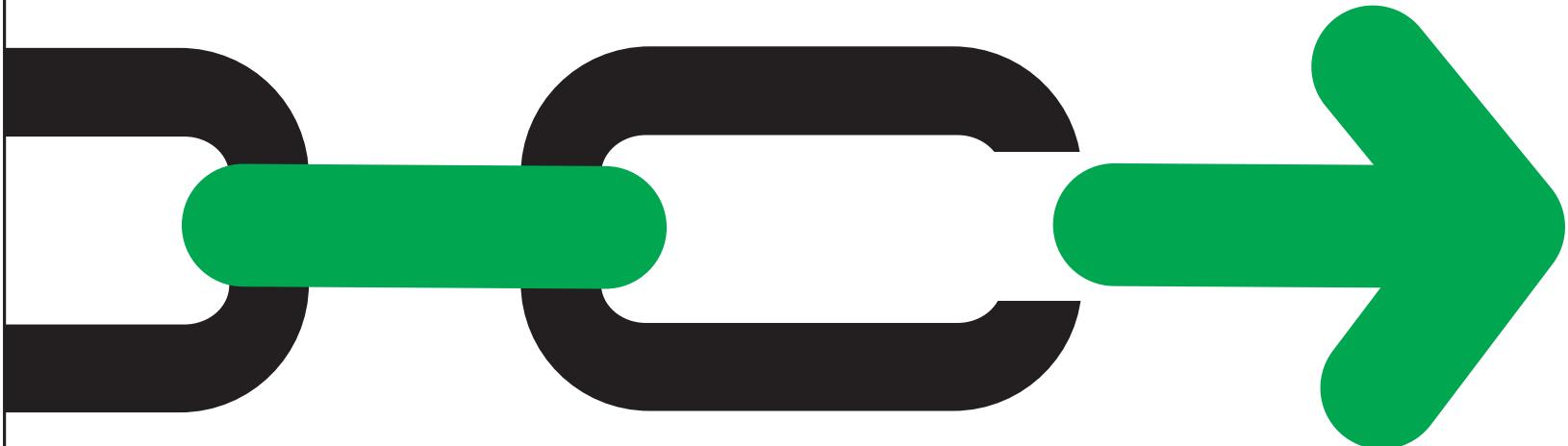
MAKE NO MISTAKE: The four-piece group rock out at Live @ Zebra Bar



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TALK TIME

DAVID CRESSWELL

Kent Music's ensembles manager talks to Yourmaidstone about why the organisation's Recorder Festival, held last weekend, has remained popular with youngsters for more than ten years.



Tell us about your role at Kent Music?

I manage all the County Groups and ensembles, which includes the Kent County Youth Orchestra, Kent Schools Orchestra, Kent Youth Chamber Orchestra, Kent Youth Choirs, Kent Youth Symphonic Band, Kent Youth Wind Orchestra, Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra.

I also take charge of the Kent Music Summer School that takes place at Benenden each summer, the Kent Music Academy, which is our Saturday morning school for gifted musicians and the two recorder orchestras.

As well as that, I also manage the music centres that Kent Music has across Kent. Prior to working at Kent Music I had a 33-year career as a military musician culminating as director of music of the Welsh Guards and performing at such events as the Trooping of the Colour and Festival of Remembrance.

How did you come up the idea for the Recorder Festival?

The festival has been a part of Kent Music for a number of years. Previously it was run by Robert Houl, who was the previous acting chief executive. It is now managed by Karen Barton, who is one of Kent Music's recorder teachers.

Tell us a little about it?

This year the festival took place over four nights across Kent and involved over 400 children from more than 45 schools. The largest of the events was at Mote Hall on Friday, April 3, when more than 200 children played along with the Kent Youth Recorders.

YOUR LETTERS

Extra hour at lunchtime is great news for market

MAIDSTONE: Market will open for an extra hour to give shoppers the chance to pop along in their lunch hour.

From Tuesday next week the Maidstone council-run market will close at 2.30pm instead of 1.30pm.

The council's cabinet member for leisure and culture, Cllr Brian Moss, said: "The extra hour will give people a chance to come along during their lunchtime. It's a great decision and everyone will gain from it."

Lack of quality the problem at market

I read with interest of the council's plan to keep Maidstone Market open for an hour longer each week to attract more lunchtime shoppers in last week's Yourmaidstone.

While it closing at 1.30pm could have been restrictive to office workers having the time to browse round the market, as suggested by the council, surely its appearance and appeal is the real issue.

More people would go to the market if its stalls were stocked with quality merchandise.

The market is not appealing, basically being in a car park at Lockmeadow and does not offer a wide range of goods.

Why are there not more tradesmen and locally grown food and produce there?

Surely this would be the way forward if we are looking to attract more visitors/customers to the market, rather than just keeping it open for another hour.

Edith Matheson, Maidstone
by letter



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And remember, www.yourmaidstone.co.uk is updated daily, bringing you the latest, breaking news from across Maidstone as well as our villages. We will include the best on these pages too - ensuring your comments reach the widest possible audience.

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Riding on road to ruin is no fun at all

The state of the county's roads

leave much to be desired.

As a cyclist I can vouch for the fact that the potholes in the roads are a continuing problem and seem to be getting worse.

They are a danger to life and

limb at a time when people are being encouraged to leave their cars at home and get on a more eco-friendly form of transport.

Action must be taken to sort this out as soon as possible.

George Cornwallis
by email

Unemployment is nothing to sing about

So unemployment is now at its highest level since 1997 when

Jobless figures hide the real truth

I'm afraid unemployment is even worse than Philip Menzies imagines. (Yourmaidstone letters page April 1 issue)

The real figure is conveniently separated into different categories, so the truth is hidden.

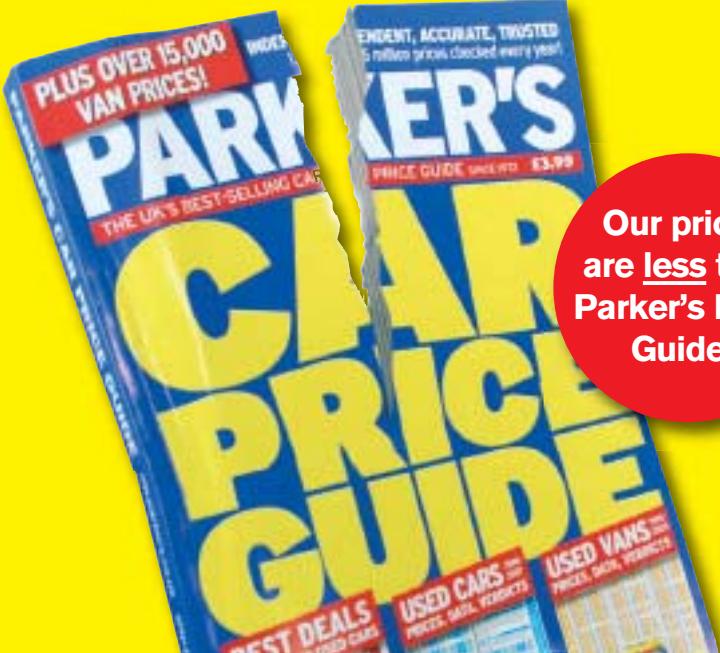
The true figure of some six million is made up of those they admit to being unemployed, over a million on Job Seekers allowance, millions on incapacity benefit and almost a million lone parents deemed not to be in "the field of work".

In total, around 20 per cent of Britons working-age population. That's why your taxes are so high!

These figures were frightening before the current Depression, now they are positively alarming as we are starting to see strikes and demonstrations.

As usual, governments afraid to take the proper action necessary and face up to reality have just been storing up even worse problems for the future.

Phil Granger, West Malling,
by email



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How did KCC not spot Icelandic meltdown?

So it's official that Kent County Council were negligent in investing in Icelandic banks is it?

It was surely pretty obvious that no one at the authority was aware of the crisis about to engulf the banking world.

So they let £50 million of our money just go down the drain.

Now that the Audit Commission has viewed the authority as negligent isn't it time that blame was accepted and recompenses offered?

Oh – and a few people should lose their highly paid jobs as well.

David Gleeson
by email

Exam standards don't stand up to the test

I was interested to see the exam questions set for children across the UK in the current round of tests.

One of them asked for lines to be drawn to connect a natural material with where it comes from.

Wool to sheep was one answer, another was cotton to plants and the third was silk to insects.

The other alternative provider options included crocodiles.

Now who can read this sort of thing and not think that these exams are being dumbed down?

They were meant to be answered by 16-year-olds, so it wasn't as if they were set for young children.

For too long people have meekly accepted the assurances that children's results are getting better and schools are improving.

This just shows that is not the case at all.

What is actually true is that anyone can pass an exam.

Mary Newsome
by email



ATTRACTION: Leeds Castle was one of the venues to take part in the Kent Big Day Out

We need more than one Big Day Out

The Kent Big Day Out is an excellent idea and a great way to promote local attractions.

But wouldn't it be a better idea to stagger the special offers so that not all are available on the same day.

That would give people even more chance to experience what the county has to offer; rather than just making one trip or spending half an hour somewhere before rushing off to another castle, park or stately home and not doing justice to any one of them.

Terry Moore, Maidstone
by email

Join us in run toward meningitis vaccine

We would like to ask fitness-minded readers to run for Meningitis UK in this year's Great North Run.

General public entries are now full, but we still have a few places left in our Meningitis Musketeers team for the world's biggest half-marathon on Sunday, September 20.

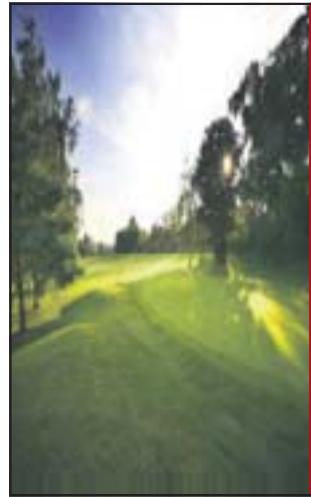
Meningitis UK has a single focus: to find a vaccine to eradicate all forms of meningitis.

Tragically, meningitis and meningoococcal septicaemia affect thousands of people in the UK every year and kill more children under five than any other infectious disease.

Our Search 4 a Vaccine Campaign aims to raise £7 million to fund research into eradicating meningoococcal group B, the most common form of meningitis in the UK.

If you would like to help us achieve our vision, please phone Lauren on 0117 302 6191 for a sponsorship pack.

Lauren Vincent
Meningitis UK



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Serving up a tasty Easter dish

TURKEY is not just for Christmas – with its variety of different cuts and uses, it's the perfect meat to enjoy all year round.

So with Easter just round the corner why not serve up a delicious turkey roast for all the family to enjoy?

Turkey is the only meat classed as a superfood and being low in fat as well as high in nutrients, vitamins and protein, it's no wonder why. It looks fantastic on the table, is easy to prepare and is enjoyed by young and old alike.

If you don't fancy cooking a whole bird, there are plenty of other turkey joints to choose from including a boned and rolled breast and an easy to carve crown.

After a wholesome turkey meal it's time to kick back and finish the day with a cup of tea and some delicious Easter cake.

To make cooking your turkey meal even easier, you will need some aluminium foil – BacoFoil is the strongest and most trusted brand, and is available in Extra Thick (ideal for grilling), Classic and Non-Stick varieties (ideal for everyday use) to make cooking and roasting fuss-free.

Additionally, BacoFoil Non-Stick makes your recipes even healthier as its unique coating means there's no need for additional fat or oil,



so it instantly reduces fat content without compromising on taste or appearance. Plus, as food doesn't stick to BacoFoil Non-Stick, the turkey comes out looking perfect.

We have teamed up with British Turkey and BacoFoil this Easter, to offer five of you the chance of winning a great prize. You could get your hands on some fantastic aluminium BacoFoil roasting trays and a roll of the all important extra strong BacoFoil Roasting Foil to help cook the turkey, as well as a beautiful tiered china cake stand and BacoFoil baking paper so you can enjoy an Easter tea in style. Also included are a British Turkey apron, shopping bag and copy of The Little Book of Great British Turkey Recipes.

To have a go at winning the lot all you have to do is simply answer the question below and



send your entry on a postcard along with your email address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to Easter Comp, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SR. The closing date is April 10, 2009.

Question: Which is the only meat classed as a superfood?

For great recipe ideas to serve this Easter go to www.britishturkey.co.uk/recipes.

To check out the entire Baco range and download your 20p off coupon log on to www.baco.co.uk.

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If you do not wish to receive any literature please write 'no literature' on your entry.

GO WILD THIS EASTER!

AT HOWLETTS & PORT LYMPNE

Get creative at Howletts

7th, 9th, 14th & 16th April 2009

Bring your family to Howletts Wild Animal Park this Easter and create fun animal masks, badges and much more!

Easter Egg Challenge

10th to 13th April 2009

Navigate your way around Howletts or Port Lympne with a souvenir map, collecting animal names to complete your challenge and claim your reward!

Prices for both events includes entry to the park.

£15 Adults, £12 Children (under 16 years)

Booking is essential as places are limited.

*** On individual park tickets only. Tickets for these events are not available online.**

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KOS MEDIA READER OFFER

Evolution II manual carpet sweeper

A must have for every home Ewbank have been producing non-electric carpet sweepers for over a century and their products are still regarded as the best in the world.

This Evolution II manual carpet sweeper is no exception. Just as you would expect, it is lightweight and easy to use. It needs no electricity and is an easy and convenient way to clean your carpets and floors at a moment's notice.



The long life natural bristle brush efficiently sweeps up crumbs and dirt left behind by children and pets and the large capacity dustpan is easy to empty. Other features include a soft furniture guard and it also automatically cleans its own brushes. The Evolution II is available in silver for £29.99 and makes a perfect companion for your vacuum cleaner.

Online Price: £29.99



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Political activist and funnyman Mark Thomas is touring his latest show, It's the Stupid Economy! and wants your input to create a People's Manifesto to help the country

AFTER nearly 25 years of making people laugh and think at the same time, Mark Thomas is still making waves in the world of politics.

In his latest show, It's The Stupid Economy!, Thomas sets out to meet the people and gather together collective ideas about how we could make our country better. The comedian aims to create a People's Manifesto, which he will then 'road test' and see if he can make these ideas into reality.

Each audience will be asked to put forward its favourite ideas for dealing with the broken economy and the environment, giving Thomas something to work from as he attempts to bring about real change.

He is no stranger to making things happen, having been instrumental in bringing about a change in inheritance tax laws in 1998. Thomas fronted an investigation for Channel 4's Dispatches which uncovered the ways in which wealthy people had been avoiding inheritance tax by making their homes, art and furniture available for public viewing –

without telling anyone about it. In the following budget, the then-Chancellor Gordon Brown changed the law.

Born in South London in 1963, Thomas studied theatre arts at university and performed shows in miners' soup kitchens and fundraising events during the strike. Since taking to the stage as a comic in 1985, he has become arguably one of Britain's most prominent political activists.

With seven series of his own show, The Mark Thomas Comedy Product, on Channel 4 and a regular column in the New Statesman magazine, Thomas has made a career out of exposing injustice and scandal. His investigations have covered such diverse subjects as the use of torture and UK equipment in East Timor, Nestle's change of labelling on baby milk in Africa, Coca Cola and the Immigration and Asylum Bill.

His activities reportedly led to a prominent politician asking civil servants to 'dig the dirt' on Thomas in 2001, but he has continued to investigate and demonstrate about issues such as anti-terror laws, arms dealing and nuclear weapons inspections.

In 2005 he became the Guinness

World Record Holder for the most political demonstrations in 24 hours. Other accolades include a Sony Radio Award, the UN Association Global Human Rights Defender Award, the Kurdish National Congress Medal of Honour and a Time Out Comedy Award. The third series of his television show received a special commendation at Amnesty International's media awards in 1999.

Last year Thomas was made an honorary doctor by Bradford University for his services to peace and his contribution as a comedian, political activist, presenter and investigative journalist, particularly for his campaigning on the ethics of the arms trade.

Mark Thomas will be at the Gulbenkian Theatre in Canterbury on Thursday, April 23; the Hazlitt Theatre in Maidstone on Tuesday, April 28 and the Trinity Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on Tuesday, June 30.

MARK THOMAS

Various dates
various venues



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EASTER AT LEEDS CASTLE

Friday, April 10 to Monday, April 13
Leeds Castle, near Maidstone

ENJOY that Easter feeling by taking the family on a day trip to the beautiful Leeds Castle.

Throughout the Easter weekend there will be lots of seasonal activities for children to enjoy. See the estate's gorgeous young animals, such as ducklings, and visit the Bunny Burrows in the grounds.

Visitors can get creative by making animal masks in the craft marquee and there will be plenty of excitement on offer with the intriguing Easter trail, with chocolate bunnies for those who successfully reach the end.

The Easter celebration forms part of a busy year for the castle, which is marking the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's coronation with



a series of Tudor-themed events throughout the year. Leeds Castle was a favourite palace of the king and provided a royal residence for six medieval queens of England. Key the Castle Tickets cost

£16.50/£13.50 for adults and £9.50 for children and are valid for 12 months from the date of purchase. For more information call 01622 765400 or go online at www.leeds-castle.com.

CHASE AND STATUS

Tuesday, April 14
Beluga Bar, Maidstone

ENJOY a lesson in the best alternative sounds with brand new midweek student night, Positive+ Education.

Launching next week, the night will feature a wide range of music from indie dance to electro, hip hop to dubstep, breakbeat to drum and bass. Positive+ Education gets underway with a master class from the hottest act currently on the scene, Chase & Status.

Their debut LP, More Than A Lot, has sold more than 40,000 copies and they have topped the UK dance chart several times. Two singles have each been named The Hottest Record In The World on Zane Lowe's Radio 1 show and they have successfully remixed tracks by The Prodigy, Estelle, Dizzee Rascal, Hadouken and Craig David.

This act is more often found supporting the likes of Pendulum or playing primetime slots at festivals like Global Gathering, so do not miss this chance to see them in action at Maidstone's new club in Bank Street.

The event starts 9pm and admission costs £4/£3, strictly over-18s. Call 01622 761300 or email Maidstone@belugabar.com.



THE TOY HEARTS

Monday, April 13
Zebra Bar, Maidstone

BLUEGRASS music gets a glamorous makeover in the form of Birmingham five-piece band, The Toy Hearts.

Usually considered to be rather staid, the genre is lent a touch of class by sisters Hannah and Sophia Johnson. Both in their early 20s and blessed with impressive skill for playing bluegrass, they bring touches of swing, traditional country, rockabilly and blues to their sound.

They have earned acclaim not only in the UK, but also in Europe and the US. When they opened for Ricky Skaggs last year, he was suitably impressed and their debut album, If The Blues Come Calling, earned a four-star review in Maverick magazine.



Composed of the two sisters, their dad Stewart, long-time family friend Lauren Rogers and fiddler Howard Gregory, the band is often invited to play at non-country and non-bluegrass venues. They blow away audi-

ences with their drive and entertaining performances, frequently converting new fans to the genre.

The concert starts at 8pm and tickets cost £10 in advance or £12 on the door. To book call 01622 744481.

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MAIDSTONE LEISURE

Fundraiser will be a tasty event next month

ENJOY some delicious food and good company at a fundraising event in Aylesford next month.

A Kentish Evening will be held at The North Barn at The Friars on Friday, May 1, and will include a three-course meal provided by celebrity TV chef, Richard Phillips. The event starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £60. To book call 01622 717272 or email events@thefriars.org.uk.

Royal treat for visitors to Tunbridge Wells

VISITORS to Tunbridge Wells can take advantage of a real spa town experience when the Chalybeate Spring opens.

The town is currently celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 'Royal' prefix, so visitors can really feel like distinguished guests. The Tourist Information Centre also offers scheduled guided walks at 11.30am Thursday and Saturday. Tickets cost £3.50 with a glass of spring water.

Discover the magic of The Ugly Duckling

A LONELY little creature sets out to discover where he truly belongs in The Ugly Duckling.

Acclaimed theatre company Travelling Light presents a magical production of the classic fairytale. The Ugly Duckling can be seen at the Exchange Studio in Maidstone at 3.30pm, Tuesday. Tickets cost £8.50/£6.50 or £25 for families. Call 01622 758611 or www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk.

Re-live favourite rock moments at the pub

THE best of American rock will be showcased in a live gig by exciting tribute band Crush.

Music from huge acts like Bon Jovi, Van Halen and David Lee Roth can feature in performances by the local band. Find out more about them online at www.crushonline.co.uk. Crush will be appearing at the Druids Arms in Earl Street, Maidstone, at 9pm on Saturday. Call 01622 758516.

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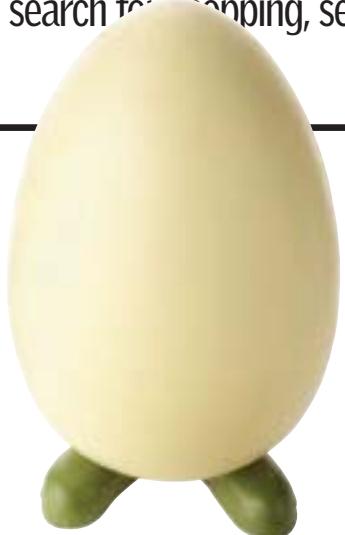


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Easter bunny,
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Molly Moo chocolate
treat, price £3.99



MAIDSTONE SHOPPING

Build your own cuddly friend and join the hunt

A CUDDLY toy store in the county town is offering customers various deals.

The Build-a-Bear workshop, in Fremlin Walk, will be hosting an Eggciting Easter Hunt daily until April 11. Youngsters visiting the store from now until then could be in with a chance of winning a prize.

Children who love cuddly toys but suffer from asthma can head into the store on April 13 to buy an Asthma Friendly Velvet Pup, for £12.50.

Perfect patch to pick up some cool kids clothes

KIDS can make sure they are wearing the latest trends this spring with half price discounts at Pumpkin Patch.

The children's clothing store, in Fremlin Walk, which caters for newborns to 11 year olds, is offering 50 per cent off all tops and bottoms in the spring collection. There is also a further 30 per cent discount on all winter clearance items – priced as marked and while stocks last.

The offers are only available in-store.

Don't leave out the cats and dogs this weekend

WHEN all the family is enjoying Easter do not forget your furry friends.

Chocolate is toxic to dogs and cats, so Pets At Home has produced a special range of chocolate-free Easter eggs for cats, dogs – available in both adult and puppy sizes – and small animals such as hamsters.

Priced from £1.99, there is a delicious treat for even the smallest member of the family at the South Aylesford Retail Park store.

Spend an evening with morning fitness expert

LEADING fitness, diet and lifestyle expert Joanna Hall visits Champneys in Tunbridge Wells next Wednesday.

The former This Morning guru will be giving two talks about topics such as how diet and walking can combine to achieve good health and weight loss.

The event runs from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on April 15. There will be time for a Q&A session, refreshments and a mini facial or hand massage. Tickets cost £12.50. See www.champneys.com for details.

Sign up for the secrets of good skin in store

SKINCARE specialist Liz Earle will be signing copies of her new book at Bluewater next week.

The author, TV presenter and health and beauty specialist reveals the key to her radiant look in *Liz Earle: Skin Secrets*.

She will be appearing at the Waterstone's store from 5.30pm on Thursday, April 16.

Liz Earle: *Skin Secrets* is published by Kyle Cathie and priced at £19.99.

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– a pair each of Bypass and an Anvil Secateurs. As any gardener will advise, you can cause untold damage to your plants and trees by using the wrong secateurs when pruning. This set will ensure that you always have the right tool for the job..

Manufactured in Germany by WOLF, famous for their quality precision engineering, both secateurs have high

carbon steel, hardened, precision blades to provide exceptional cutting performance.

- The Bypass Secateur: For delicate and precise pruning will cut stems up to 21mm.
- The Anvil Secateur: Cuts stems up to 19mm; ideal for general pruning, particularly of woody and tough stems. Guaranteed for 5-years, both secateurs have grips which are specially contoured to provide a firm grip in all conditions and are designed for right or left handed use. They feature an internal leaf-spring system for longer life and the blades are non-stick coated for easy cutting and cleaning.

The set of two pairs of Secateurs are on offer for just £16.99 – a saving of £8 on the manufacturer's RRP. Wolf set of bypass & anvil secateurs £16.99

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■ BY ALISON PURDY

WHEN I was told we were going for a walk in the island's interior on our first day on the South Pacific island of Tahiti, I imagined a gentle stroll through the lush green jungle that covers much of the island.

I hadn't imagined that a couple of hours later I would be waist-deep in gushing water dressed in a wet suit with a harness strapped round me, scrambling up a ravine.

Like most people, my image of Tahiti and her 118 islands scattered over five archipelagos in the South Pacific was of sun-soaked shores lined with bamboo bungalows perched on stilts

over turquoise-blue sea. I expected the sort of destination that mainly attracts honeymooners drawn to the island by its romantic isolation.

That is certainly on offer. However, as my day spent clambering up a volcanic lava-tube and hoisting myself up waterfalls proved, there is far more to the islands.

I had never been canyoning before and the experience was both terrifying and exhilarating. When I did manage to look up from where I was putting my feet, I was stunned by the incredible beauty that surrounded me.

Green mountains densely covered in what looked like large broccoli heads sloped up to

the sky. Below, the land dropped down dramatically to the sea.

In an effort to promote Tahiti's unique cultural identity, the Radisson Plaza Resort Hotel in the bustling capital city Papeete, has its own full-time 'cultural animator' who puts on daily demonstrations of traditional dance and crafts as an introduction to Tahitian culture.

The day after our canyoning adventure, we boarded a sea catamaran for the half hour trip from Tahiti to the even greener island of Moorea. The island's Sofitel beach resort does live up to the honeymoon brochure billing with individual bungalows all either standing on

stilts over the water or lining the beach front with the most breathtaking ocean views.

Our next stop was the geographically-unusual island of Rangiroa – which consists of a string of coral encircling a turquoise lagoon and is one of the world's most popular diving destinations and famous for the black pearl.

Tahiti and her collection of islands may be the epitome of the South Seas holiday hideaway – but those keen to do more than lie on the beach enjoy a fantastic choice of leisure options, from scuba diving to hiking in the mountains and searching for that elusive and perfect black pearl.

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FACT FILE: TAHITI

Time difference	-11 hours (GMT)
Language	French
Largest city	Papeete
Population	178,130
Currency	Pacific Franc (approx 130 to £1)
Religion	Christian
Climate	Tropical

Travel details

Alison Purdy flew to Papeete with British Airways and Air Tahiti Nui via New York and LA and she was a guest of Radisson Plaza Resort, Tahiti, Sofitel Moorea Beach Resort, Moorea and Raira Lagon, Rangiroa.

Operator Turquoise Holidays offers a 10-night package to Tahiti from £2,295 (two sharing), including Virgin flights ex-Heathrow to Papeete with Virgin and Air Tahiti Nui (via LA), three nights at Radisson Plaza Tahiti (room-only), four nights at Sofitel Moorea (room only), three nights at Relais de Josephine (half-board), domestic flights, transfers.

Leisure activities include a day's canyoning bookable through Mato-Nui Excursions, with picnic, £73; Moorea Hiking is booked directly through Tohie'a Excursions; hike to pass of the three pine trees, with picnic, £43; snorkelling at Blue Lagoon on Rangiroa, £44.

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YOUR TV REVIEW

■ BY TOM BETTS

PRIMEVAL

ITV1, 6.15pm, Saturday

ROBIN HOOD

BBC One, 7.45pm, Saturday

IT'S very difficult to know what ITV is up to with Primeval, other than copy Doctor Who as much as it possibly can, of course.

Each time I've tuned into this programme over the course of the past few series the plot has been almost the same as the last time.

The basic scenario revolves around these basics: Lots of running around, time portal or wormhole opens up, big beast of some kind smashes stuff up, more running around, thing is killed or disappears back through portal, every one breathes a big sigh of relief and has a nice sit down.

Intersperse that with Hannah Spearritt, the girl who used to be in S Club 7 – you know, the really boyish-looking one – appearing as confused as the viewers while spending a lot of time in sports leisurewear.

This doesn't add up to a masterpiece.

Okay, so it may not try to be anything other than throwaway TV, but sometimes you feel like the writers of this have just given up and opted for the same story each and every week.

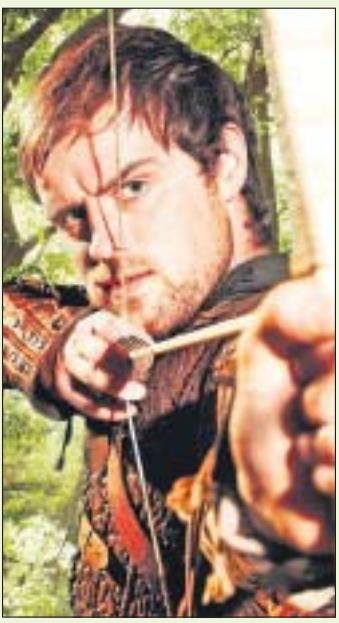
While Doctor Who episodes can vary wildly in quality (largely depending on who's penned it) this never lifts itself above banged-together-by-a-bunch-of-sixth-formers level.

The special effects are hardly Jurassic Park either.

I'm afraid to say the makers of this one have got dinosaur pie all over their faces.

Over on BBC One, meanwhile, Robin Hood has returned to our Saturday nights to rob from the rich to give to the poor once again.

Mind you, this is another half-



WOOD YOU BELIEVE IT? Jonas Armstrong plays the lead role in BBC drama Robin Hood

hearted effort that has never really taken off and looks like it will crash off our screens next year.

There's something about the lead, Jonas Armstrong, that doesn't really gel. He seems far too young and neither cuts a dash or could bowl a maiden over.

Looking more like the lost Gallagher brother than a hero of folklore who could lead Sherwood Forest's finest into battle, it shows that if your main man is flawed then it's going to be hard work getting the rest to work.

I know that personal hygiene may not have been as high on the agenda as it is now, but a shave and haircut wouldn't go amiss, Robin.



YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS

(Jan 21-Feb 19) RESIST the urge to go on a spending spree. You need to hang on to your cash now. There will be plenty of time to buy what you want soon. If you're having a hard time making ends meet, this would be a good time to return to school. Don't underestimate the importance of diplomacy.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



PISCES

(Feb 20-Mar 20) AN angry outburst could drive a romantic partner from your door. You need to learn how to express your frustrations in a healthier way. Right now you tend to bury your feelings until they fester and explode. This wreaks havoc on all of your relationships.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



ARIES

(Mar 21-Apr 20) DONT push your luck at work. Although a colleagues methodical approach annoys you, it's essential the two of you get along. Putting them under pressure will backfire. Actually, you could benefit by adopting some of their vigilance. A relationship is coming to fruition.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



GEMINI

(May 22-Jun 22) AN overbearing boss is making life tough. It gets you down that you can't get up and leave this restrictive situation. Remember you have other responsibilities. By staying put, you'll be doing the wisest thing. The good news is that your love life is getting better.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



TAURUS

(Apr 21-May 21) DONT let friends push you into a decision you'll later regret. You're the type who likes to think things through so rushing into a situation will only create more stress. It's especially important to take your time with a new romance. You could finally get word about a new job.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



LEO

(Jul 24-Aug 23) TENSIONS are mounting between you and a prospective partner. In many ways this seems like the worst time to launch an affair. You have so many financial and work responsibilities. What you fail to realise is that you need to balance work with play.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



VIRGO

(Aug 24-Sep 23) A BUSINESS or romantic contact is tired of you dragging your feet. Unfortunately, you are just not ready to make a serious commitment. It's better to break things off now, before either one of you becomes too fully invested in this relationship. A financial matter is music to your ears.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SCORPIO

(Oct 24-Nov 22) ALL is not fair in love and war. Beware of engaging in underhanded behaviour, or it will come back to haunt you. If you're in love with someone who is obsessed with somebody else, stay calm. The tide will turn in your favour, provided you refrain from jealous displays.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 23-Dec 21) HIDDEN resentments are coming to the surface. You're tired of obeying a stuffy person's orders. Quitting a dead-end job may be the best course of action. If you're looking for a better opportunity, spread the word among friends. Who you know is more important than what you know.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



CAPRICORN

(Dec 22-Jan 20) ANGRY words could fly thick and fast between you and a conservative authority figure. You're tired of being treated like an ignoramus. By standing your ground, they'll grow to respect you. You may not have a lot of experience, but you are a hard worker.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

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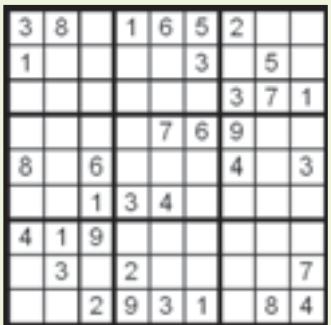
CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

No82

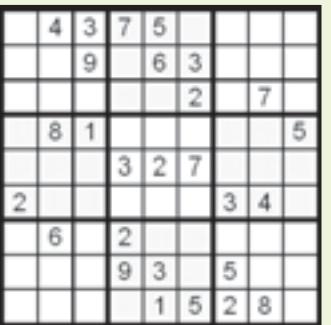
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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9

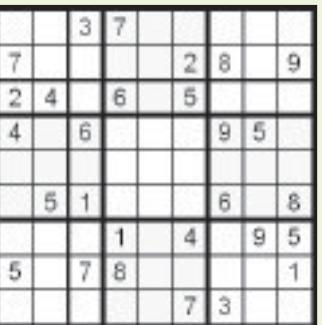
EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



CRYPTIC CLUES

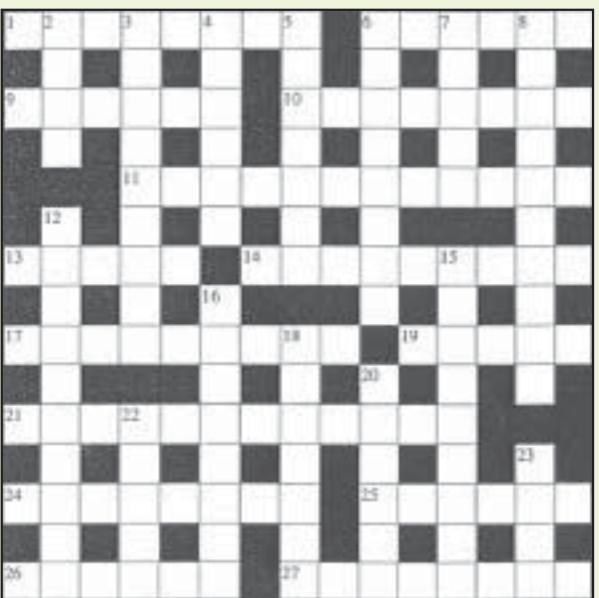
ACROSS

1 Angela met hysteria about purple gem (8)
 6 Springy? (6)
 9 It is light yellow and soft in marshy ground (6)
 10 Many a caper by the Parisian in song (8)
 11 Ought enemies be removed from place for public worship? (7-5)
 13 Shoot, say, the rapid (5)
 14 Engagement involved both later (9)
 17 Would it foil attempts to catch it? (9)
 19 Hebridean island with no priest? (5)
 21 Post for 25% of the employees (12)
 24 Very modern step wise man concealed (5-3)
 25 Royal colour (6)
 26 Team from Plymouth, we hear, or Lochgilphead area (6)
 27 Risked including Kenneth when it became more gloomy (8)

DOWN

2 Thousand unwell at the plant (4)
 3 It displays the bill of fare (9)
 4 Rodney floundered in the distance (6)
 5 A lightweight slab of clay outside that can be perceived by touch (7)
 6 Sour-tasting wine from France eg Ray rejected (8)
 7 Greek character included fashionable beast! (5)
 8 Sailor who is fit? (4,6)
 12 Rider to display item of clothing (10)
 15 Military unit's job supporting church (4-5)
 16 Nevertheless seeking a monopoly (5,3)
 18 Stop payment - we object during pay out (7)
 20 Pre-arranged strike first using electronic device (6)
 22 In a trick you caught little Richard (5)
 23 Sad sportsman (4)

SCRIBBLE HERE



QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

1 Persuasive (8)
 6 Develop (6)
 9 Spray liquid (6)
 10 Dirtiest (8)
 11 Monitor lizard (6,6)
 13 Brown pigment (5)
 14 Pretender (9)
 17 Teaching area (9)
 19 Backbone (5)
 21 Sweet coloured nut (6,6)
 24 Kerosene (8)
 25 Hate (6)
 26 Zenith (6)
 27 In transit (2,3,3)

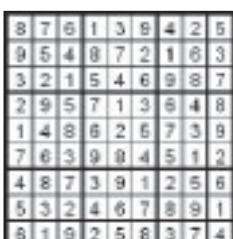
DOWN

2 Northern Scandinavian (4)
 3 Speed (9)
 4 Skin disease (6)
 5 Faint-hearted (7)
 6 Scenery (8)
 7 Porcelain (5)
 8 Bad luck (10)
 12 Improve (10)
 15 Disown (9)
 16 Pierce through (8)
 18 Resort in Florida (7)
 20 Drinking-cup (6)
 22 Delta (anag. 5)
 23 Order to stop (4)

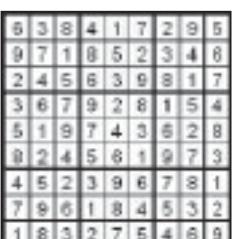
LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS No81

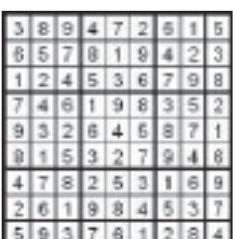
EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



Answers to all of this week's quizzes can be found on our website

CRYPTIC SOLUTION No81

ACROSS: 1 Sky-sign 5 Tell off 9 Baku
 10 Suspension 12 Low-level 13 Theist
 14 Hundred Years 17 Aladdin's lamp 21
 Idiocy 23 Embossed 24 Ventilator 25 Tizz
 26 In place 27 Hayride. **DOWN:** 2 Klaxon
 3 Squelched 4 Gas oven 6 Ejected 7 Lisle
 8 Footsole 11 Self-respect 15 Expositor 16
 Bludgeon 18 Idyllic 19 Alberta 20 Seized
 22 Octal.

QUICK SOLUTION No82

6 Double 22 Death 23 Whoa
 7 Repudiate 16 Freshly 18 Oldards 20
 7 China 8 Mistfortune 12 Admirable 15
 13 Quirk 14 Quirk 15 Quirk 16 Quirk
 17 Quirk 18 Quirk 19 Quirk 20
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 93 Quirk 94 Quirk 95 Quirk 96 Quirk
 97 Quirk 98 Quirk 99 Quirk 100 Quirk

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what's inside**Page 4-5**

Are you prepared for the changing employment laws? Being informed could save your firm time and money during the recession when redundancies are reaching new heights

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Make sure you weigh up the pros and cons before deciding on renting or buying a commercial property. It's a big move you need to get right

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Now it's even more important that you organise your estate.

Making a will ensures your family don't have more heartache after you've gone

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money driving diesel? We find out...

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What seemed like a happy

divorce settlement before the current downturn, could now be heading back to court as property and other split assets decrease in value

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Keep tax stresses out of your relationship by being prepared for the future

Page 18

All you need to know to be ahead of the game when it comes to looking for a job in these tricky times

Pages 19

Don't let debt take control. Get the help you need with loans and the advice to put your finances on the road to recovery to ride out the recession

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Be prepared, it will be to your credit

By **TONY PATEY**

EXPERTS are predicting that more than 40,000 companies will be declared insolvent during 2009 – a rise of 35 per cent in last year, and 62 per cent higher than in 2007.

To help ensure your firm doesn't become one of the victims, national insurance broker Bluefin Insurance Services, which has offices in Gravesend, Maidstone and Tonbridge, has drawn up a list of protection tips for recession-battered firms.

Peter Castle, executive director, pinpointed, for example, money owed as a crucial factor that could affect cash flow.

"Money owed may represent as much as 40 per cent of a company's actual assets.

"What would happen to your business if a major supplier or creditor went under? As insolvencies climb, having adequate credit insurance could mean the difference between your business surviving or failing."

His six top tips to keep one step ahead of the increased dangers facing businesses in 2009 are:

- Take a long-term view over redundancies. Cutting too much from your skills base may create irreversible workload pressures.



POCKET WATCH: Take appropriate steps to see your business survive economic downturn

- Ensure your business employs best practice in employment matters. Recent rises in statutory redundancy pay rates mean layoffs are more expensive than ever.
- Take care when changing your insurance cover, and do so only if you are sure it will not compromise your ability to win new business. Many organisations, particularly in the public sector, have strict insurance requirements included in their supplier contracts.
- Credit insurance can provide vital protection from the potentially terminal disruption of bad debt and late payment. Make sure you have adequate cover.
- Be realistic about any insurance premium savings obtainable from changes to your cover. Remember that legal and regulatory risk exposure does not recede in a recession.
- Don't give staff a reason to defect to rivals by cutting back on training and risk management. Dissatisfied staff are more likely to try to commit fraud, which is on the rise as the economy worsens.
- Take care when changing your insurance cover, and do so only if you are sure it will not compromise your ability to win new business. Many organisations, particularly in the public sector, have strict insurance requirements included in their supplier contracts.

Mr Castle said: "With professional advice, awareness of the risks ahead and perhaps just a little bit of luck, well-prepared businesses have every chance of surviving the downturn."

Your guide to get through the recession

A NEW guide to help businesses in Kent find their way through the economic crisis has been published by the South East England Development Agency (Seeda).

It's called Open for Business – A Guide to Business Support in the South East and it offers businesses a simple map to what is on offer through Seeda and its regional partners.

Seeda said it is working with Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council and the Government's Real Help for Businesses Now scheme to provide help in areas from accessing finance through to tackling redundancy.

Many of these initiatives are available through Business Link, the Seeda-funded business support service, which also offers free business 'health checks'.

Jeff Alexander, Seeda's executive director for global competitiveness, said: "We are now focusing our efforts on helping South East businesses through these extremely challenging times.

"This package of measures can make a real difference, and thousands of businesses have already taken advantage.

"I would strongly urge any business feeling the effects of the downturn to get in touch with Business Link to see what help is available."

For further information, Business Link is on 0845 6009006.

For copies of the Open for Business booklet, send an e-mail detailing the number of copies required and recipient address to pressoffice@seeda.co.uk.

Seeda is a government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of the South East.

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Ready for the new employment law?



Solicitor Nadia Omar offers this checklist for recession-hit firms who will also be facing new employment law rules coming in early in April

The New ACAS Code of Practice

The Employment Act 2008 will repeal the controversial statutory dispute resolution procedures.

It will be replaced by the new ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures.

This is expected to reduce the regulatory burden for employers and provide greater flexibility for managing workplace disputes.

The code only applies to disciplinary and grievance matters and does not apply to redundancy dismissals.

Employers are encouraged to resolve disputes informally and consider the use of mediation.

Employers should carry out the disciplinary and grievance process without delay and ensure all matters are fully investigated.

Failure to follow the disciplinary procedure will no longer render a dismissal automatically unfair and employers will not be penalised for technical breaches of the code.

Employers should beware: grievances have been extended to cover all concerns, problems or complaints, and employees no longer need to raise a grievance and wait 28 days prior to issuing a claim.

Tribunals will have the power to increase or decrease an award by 25 per cent for an unreasonable failure to comply with the code.

Trade union membership rules

The implementation of section 19 of the act will entitle a trade union to exclude or expel members who belong to a political party such as the BNP.

To safeguard individuals from arbitrary abuse, union rules must allow it, a fair procedure must be followed and it must not result in the loss of an individual's livelihood or other "exceptional hardship".

The low number of claims that are lodged

against unions for wrongful expulsion suggests that this amendment is unlikely to have much practical effect.

The Employment Tribunals (Constitution and Rules of Procedure) (Amendment) Regulations 2008

The regulations remove a judge's discretion not to issue a default judgment if a response is not filed.

This makes it essential for respondents to file a response within the 28-day time limit. Failure to do so will bar the respondent from submitting a defence and may result in the claim being determined without a hearing.

The rules relating to the withdrawal and dismissal of claims have been clarified.

If a claim has been withdrawn, respondents should apply to have the claim dismissed within 28 days. This will bar a claimant from re-lodging the claim.

Furthermore, proceedings which have been withdrawn and settled through ACAS will be automatically dismissed by the tribunal. This will avoid the need to make a separate dismissal application.

New rules on electronic communication will assist parties relying on evidence by disabled witnesses or those abroad who are unable to attend the hearing.

Employment Tribunals Act 1996 (Tribunal Composition) Order 2009

This will enable cases of unpaid holiday pay to be heard by an employment judge sitting alone.

Claims are usually heard by an employment judge and two lay members.

This order should result in such cases being dealt with faster and more efficiently.

• Nadia Omar is a solicitor in the employment department at law firm Thomson Snell & Passmore, which has offices in Tunbridge Wells and Greenhithe.

Taxman will be getting tough



ADVICE: Steve Carpenter

KENT companies could soon find they're getting unexpected visits from the taxman as HM Revenue and Customs picks up tough new powers to enter business premises.

Steve Carpenter, tax manager at Maidstone-based DSH Chartered accountants and business advisors, warned: "From April 1, HMRC will have a new code of powers and penalties that will make it easier for them to obtain information and, if irregularities are found, to match a penalty to the seriousness of the mistake or omission."

The powers being given to HMRC, which aim to identify situations where there is a greater risk of mistakes being made in the completion of tax returns, will enable officers to:

• Obtain documents from a business at any time, even if a return has yet to be filed.

"For example, if the mistake arises because you

failed to take reasonable care in completing your tax return, the penalty will be up to 30 per cent, but if it is a deliberate understatement that you attempt to conceal, the penalty could be up to 100 per cent.

"The concept of 'taking reasonable care' is key to the value of the penalty and will vary from taxpayer to taxpayer.

"A large company with its own accounts department will be expected to have a higher standard of accuracy in its record keeping than an individual, but both must keep adequate records to enable them to complete the required returns and to spot a significant error."

"The processes are becoming more structured and so, to avoid penalties in the future, it is important to ensure your records are adequate and to seek advice for your particular situation."

By **PAM LOCH** and **ANDREW BAYJOU**

EMPLOYERS need to brace themselves now for more employment law changes.

Some changes will have an impact on how businesses have to manage their employees, while others will result in a greater financial burden on businesses.

On April 6 the Employment Act 2008 abolishes the much-criticised statutory disciplinary, dismissal and grievance procedures, and businesses will be required to comply with the new ACAS Code of Practice.

The code will not be legally binding but it will be regarded as best practice and it will be used to determine whether a fair procedure has been followed.

Defending an employment claim will become easier, though Employment Tribunals will no longer be compelled to decide that a dismissal was automatically unfair if the employer failed to follow one part of the old procedure.

Interestingly the code will not apply to all dismissals. For example it won't apply to redundancies.

There are also complex transitional provisions and employers should exercise caution and take early advice as a failure to follow the code could result in an employment tribunal increasing an award of compensation by up to 25 per cent.

Aside from the demise of the statutory procedures, other changes impacting on businesses from April 6 include increases in:

- Statutory Sick Pay to £79.15 a week
- Statutory Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Pay to £123.06 a week.

These increases are in line with the annual changes the Government announces in these benefits and in certain cases the payments can be recovered from the Government. Rumours abound that statutory redundancy pay may be increased from the present cap of £350 a week – but these remain rumours at present.

Aside from those benefits increasing, holiday entitlement is also increasing. From April 1 the

NEW LAW: From April 1 the minimum paid holiday for workers will increase to 5.6 weeks or 28 days each year



Businesses prepare for the tide of change

minimum paid holiday for workers increased to 5.6 weeks or 28 days each year. This should be pro-rated for part-time workers.

For businesses already offering workers 28 days including bank holidays there is no change.

For those that don't offer this at the moment though, they should review their terms and conditions to ensure 28 days holiday is the minimum entitlement.

April also sees the extension of the right to request flexible working to parents of children up to 16 years of age being introduced.

Businesses should ensure that their employment policies and procedures reflect this new right. Although it does not give a right to flexible working, businesses should prepare themselves for an increase in requests to work flexibly from employees with children

over six years of age.

From April 6, a failure to pay the national minimum wage to workers could result in a criminal penalty and a claim for underpayment of arrears plus a financial penalty.

HM Revenue and Customs will have compliance officers with additional inspection powers to search, seize and remove documents.

National minimum wage offences will carry criminal penalties ranging from £100 to £5,000.

Some of these changes could have a negative impact on businesses and increase their costs at an already difficult time. However the abolition of the statutory procedures should be a very positive step for businesses going forward.

• Pam Loch and Andrew Bayjou of employment law firm Loch Associates.

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- Theatre Royal in Margate is offering two tickets for £20 Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen – legendary jazz, Saturday, May 2
- KOS is offering a traditional feather mattress with the innovative mattress topper from only £39.99 save over 50 per cent
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- Living Out Log Cabins in Chestfield, Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off
- Aylesford Self Storage is offering free used boxes for all storage customers
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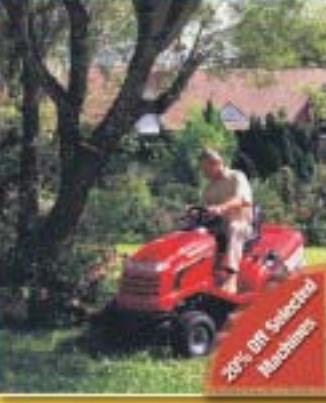
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Renting or buying? Move your business into the right property

■ BY TONY PATEY

MANY firms battling the recession are thinking of moving – but a commercial property is a major undertaking not to be taken lightly as it can affect a company's growth for a long time.

Experts say there are as many opinions regarding buying or renting commercial properties as there are commercial properties – so before you decide which way to jump, your business should take into account its own strengths, weaknesses and future plans.

What suits others won't necessarily suit you. Your premises may turn out to be your business's largest fixed asset, which makes your choice of whether to rent or buy property an important one.

There are many reasons for renting, including:

- Saving capital outlay
- Flexibility of location
- Savings on maintenance and other costs.

As a rule of thumb, renting is a good option for new businesses as it cuts down on the capital outlay needed and potentially saves having to borrow as much capital from other sources.

If you have a low cash flow and prefer to keep your property costs flexible, then renting may be the best option as it releases more money to invest in equipment, stock and employees' salaries.

Renting also enables your business the flexibility to relocate at relatively short notice should you need to expand or follow business trends.

The responsibility for maintenance, fixtures and security also rest with the owner of the property, taking away the uncertainty of these costs and helping you to budget better.

One downside of renting is the possibility of future rent rises, so it is important to know how and when the rent will be reviewed, prior to signing the lease.

The main advantages of buying are:

- Owning an asset
- Flexibility of the space to suit the business
- Tax advantages

In the long term a property that has been purchased with a commercial mortgage has the potential to increase in value, which strengthens your assets.



EASY?: If you have a low cash flow and prefer to keep your property costs flexible, then renting may be the best option

A mortgage is usually the highest fixed cost of any business, so if you are a company with a good cash flow and relatively low fixed costs then purchasing a property may well be right for you.

When you own your commercial property you can develop the space as you require with the possibility of subletting any unused room, giving your business extra income.

Generally mortgage repayments are at similar levels to rental payments, and although mortgage interest rates may increase on a commercial mortgage these are tax-deductible.

When you own a property the possibility of large rent increases is removed, which enables you to budget better and provides greater security.

One of the downsides of buying is you'll need to come up with a large deposit, and in the initial stages of any business this money could be put to other more immediate business uses.

It also becomes more difficult to relocate your business should circumstances change.

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Where there's a will there's a better way

WE can always be sure of two things – recession or no recession – and that's taxes and the Grim Reaper.

And in a time of economic turmoil you don't want your family having to cope with your tangled estate if you drop off the twig and don't leave a will.

Those of us who have come across the chaos which can happen when someone dies intestate invariably have some awful tales to tell of 'what went to whom' – and why.

Intestacy

With intestacy rules having changed recently, the picture is likely to become even more confusing, says Chatham-based law firm Stephens & Son.

Although people who inherit under the rules have not changed, the amounts involved have.

If you are married with children, the first £250,000 of your estate will now go to your surviving spouse, with the rest divided among your children.

However, the picture gets much more complex if you don't have a spouse or civil partner, or children – as surviving parents and siblings are then brought into the equation.

Ultimately, half-brothers and sisters and cousins can fall into the frame if there is no closer next of kin.

Stephens solicitor Caroline Brooks-Johnson

■ BY TONY PATEY

said: "Too many people still think that it doesn't matter to them what happens to their estate once they are dead and gone.

"In reality, it can be a costly and time-consuming process for surviving relatives to deal with intestacy and all too often it leads to family disputes and bitter arguments.

"Making a will and keeping it up-to-date is the only sure-fire way of ensuring your legacy is left to those whom you want to inherit.

"Long-lost cousins that you fell out with more than 20 years ago often emerge from the woodwork when there's no will to be found.

"If you die without a valid will your estate will be administered in accordance with the intestacy rules.

"This is a statutory 'pecking order' which dictates who gets what from your estate and who is entitled to administer that estate.

"By their very nature the intestacy rules must be general and it therefore stands to reason that they will not be suitable for everyone."

Wills can be used to encompass not only who you would like to administer your estate upon your death and to list your beneficiaries, but also to appoint guardians of children under 18, make personal gifts (of jewellery, for example), set out your funeral wishes, incorporate tax saving measures and deal with a whole host of business and family matters.



BLACK AND WHITE: Making a will and keeping it up-to-date is the only way of ensuring your legacy is left to who you want

Essential guide to where you can save

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■ Wells Clinic in Ashford is offering £25 off removal of skin tags, moles, verrucas, warts, red veins, cysts and skin peels

■ KOS is offering an Alex classic light – one of the world's best reading lights from £84.99 save up to £30

■ Bones on Beds in Herne Bay is offering 10 per cent off mattresses

■ KOS is offering a porous seepage hose, save time and money and use up to 70 per cent less water. From only £19.99 save £35 on RRP

■ Brownhills Motor Homes in Canterbury is offering £507 to spend instore when you buy a new or used motorhome

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■ Theatre Royal in Margate is offering two tickets for £20 New English Contemporary Ballet, June 12

■ KOS is offering a Karcher pressure washer kit £99.99 including free accessories save £116

■ Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £300 off all dining suite orders over £2,000

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Every ticket is valid for one year.

Terms and conditions apply, see website for details. Grounds open at 10am.



Further events this year include:

National Police Dog Trials† 23 – 26 April

Henry VIII's Royal Jousting Tournament 26 – 31 May

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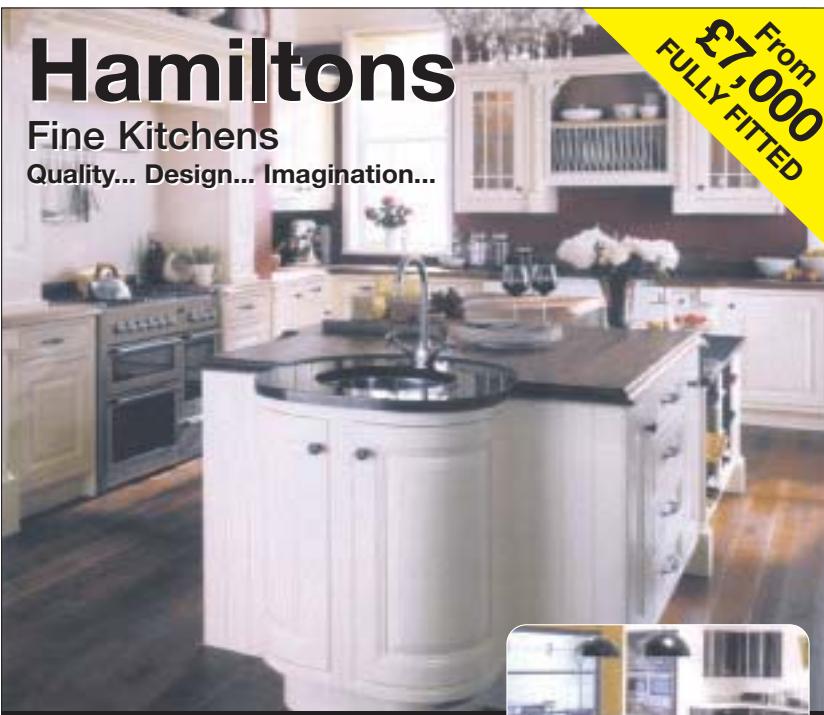
Family Fun Weekend with Jousting 19 – 20 September

† Admission to the trials is free but a valid 'Key to the Castle' ticket is required to gain entry to the castle and attractions.

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Keep things sweet and safe at work

By **TONY PATEY**

IN recession business can't afford to trip up – literally.

So Canterbury chocolate shop, Madame Oiseau, has teamed up with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to showcase good practice as part of an anti-slips, trips and falls campaign.

Kent's HSE principal inspector, Mike Walters, said the food manufacturing sector is one of the high risk areas of work.

The new Shattered Lives campaign aims to cut the number of slips, trips and falls in the workplace. Last year in Kent, 1,107 people suffered an injury because of these at work.

Madame Oiseau has a flawless health and safety record since setting up shop in 2005. To protect staff, the shop takes simple measures to clear up any spills immediately and keeps work areas clean and tidy.

The shop is a member of Produced in Kent, an organisation promoting local businesses and raising awareness of local food produce available to Kent's residents.

Mr Walters said: "It is good to see that a small business has put in place simple measures to help prevent this type of accident.

"Workers at Madame Oiseau have adopted the 'see it, sort it' approach. If someone sees a spillage on the floor, they clear it up.



HEALTH AND SAFETY: Madame Oiseau has teamed up with the Health and Safety Executive to promote safety at work; and (below) chocolates from the shop

"This is a common-sense approach to a serious health and safety issue."

Sandrine May, owner of Madame Oiseau, said: "We are pleased to support this HSE campaign to encourage workplace safety."

"We are proud of our health and safety record and wish for other small businesses like ours to take note of the statistics and advice to ensure their staff are also safe at work."

Fatalities and serious injuries arising from slips, trips and fall incidents cost the South East around £78,615,000 last year.

Three people died and 1,830 suffered major injury as a result of a slip, trip or fall from height in workplaces in the region last year.

A further 3,473 sustained injuries that kept them off work for three days or more.

Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen



A must see show, if you love Jazz or not

Digby Fairweather (now celebrating thirty years in the music business) continues to lead Britain's most exciting young jazz band, his 'Half Dozen'. First formed in 1995 the 'Half Dozen' has been constantly praised for its versatility, professionalism and showmanship.

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Keep good credit in tough times with these top tips

WITH the economy in decline, businesses should be concentrating on getting back to basics and revisiting well known and established ways of doing business successfully and economically.

Follow these top tips to help your business through the current challenges and make them standard practice in future:

Terms and conditions of business

- Review your existing terms and conditions to ensure your business is adequately protected, alternatively put fresh terms and conditions in place.
- Ensure the 'battle of the forms' is won, impose your terms and conditions at each stage of the contract formation process, especially when providing samples and quotes.
- In the event that delivered goods are not paid for, ensure they remain your property by including a 'retention of title' clause within your terms and conditions.
- Agree to the terms of payment before orders are placed, including both the time for payment and the right to charge for interest in the event of late or non payment. You have the option to charge interest for late payment of invoices either under the terms of the contract or under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998.
- Effective terms and conditions could save your business from becoming engaged in costly litigation.

By **KERRY POOLE**
and **MARIE THERESE**

Receiving payment on time

- Issue clear and accurate invoices on time and always follow them up.
- Offer as many methods of payment as you can.
- Send letters at predetermined intervals which ask for written confirmation of satisfactory delivery of the goods/services, indicate the amount outstanding, and demand payment in accordance with your terms.
- If you state that you will be instructing solicitors if payment is not received, make sure you do so and promptly. Your credibility is key to you getting paid.
- Record the date and outcome of all contact made with the debtor.
- Be proactive and chase late payments, late payments and bad debts lead to liquidity and cash-flow problems, and may even force a business into insolvency.
- **Good credit control**
 - Know your debtor – do credit checks, stick to credit limits and monitor the behaviour of your debtors.
 - If you are having difficulty in recovering what is owed to you, seek assistance quickly.
 - When dealing with outstanding payments decide whether it is worth a fight.
 - Consider your customer and, if they are key to your business, approach it diplomatically.
 - Listen to your debtor and, if there is a com-

plaint, be objective and resolve it.

- If you decide to instruct debt collectors ensure you make checks before using an agency.
- Find out what methods the agency uses. Maintaining business relationships and a good reputation are as important to your business as getting paid. Remember that unlawful methods such as harassment could lead to you being liable and can constitute a criminal offence.
- Avoid the last resort. Explain what steps you intend to take and try to reach an agreement. Recovery without legal proceedings is invariably the most desirable option.
- Always try to have a meaningful dialogue with your customer to find out why the debt has not been paid. If possible, consider offering instalments as a payment option. If you have a good system for dealing with debtors, paying someone else to collect your debts will hopefully be a rarely used last resort.
- Managing credit and cash flow in tougher economic conditions is as important, if not more, as obtaining sales.
- Make sure you take the time to deal with this critical issue.

• Lastly, make sure the payment terms you agree with your suppliers match, as far as possible, your own cash-flow forecasts. If your suppliers are reducing the credit period available to you then you will need to try to do the same with your customers.

• *Kerry Poole and Marie Therese, are solicitors in the corporate and commercial department at Thomson Snell & Passmore which has offices in Tunbridge Wells and Greenhithe.*

To see this clip, search 'driving habits'
at yourkenttv.co.uk



Julie Maddocks looks at how changing your driving habits could have a big effect on your pocket at the petrol pump

Essential guide to where you can save

- H&H Flooring in Deal is offering an extra 10 per cent off all carpets
- Avalone Flooring Ltd in Strood is offering 10 per cent off decorative flooring
- Avinco Limited aerial and satellite store in Ramsgate is offering 15 per cent off aerial installation
- GC Stevens & Son, garden machinery and woodstoves store in Sittingbourne is offering £10 off Honda mower servicing and £20 off Honda and Husqvarna ride-on mower servicing

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Julie Maddocks discovers how charity shops let you make a fashion statement and save cash

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Living Out log cabin store in Chestfield, Maidstone is offering 15 per cent off plus free delivery on all DIY log cabins

■ County Garage Motors in Herne Bay is offering free protection pack worth up to £400. Free full tank of fuel, free Gard X Paint and interior protection, free front and rear mats, on all new or used vehicles

■ Wells Clinic in Ashford is offering £50 off skin lifting and tightening lines and wrinkle treatments. Wrinkle reduction (b/tox)

■ Baileys Nissan in Canterbury is offering 15 per cent off all servicing

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

BY STEVE LOADER

WITH savings accounts currently delivering such poor interest, many people see trading in a 'gas guzzler' for a cheaper and more economical model as a better return on their investment.

And there is also some 'green'



TREND: Government road tax as well as fuel costs is powering the downsizing trend favouring small cars like the lighter and greener Mazda2 supermini

kudos to be had. The Government is using escalating road tax or VED (vehicle excise duty) to drive people into smaller and cleaner cars too.

A new scale of zero to £405/year came into force on April 1 (see later story) and is set to become tougher. By 2010, gas guzzling limos or 4x4s may face £950 road tax in the first year, although anyone spending £50-100,000 on a car is unlikely to be put off by such a paltry sum.

As a result, some manufacturers have produced models that are actually exempt from VED by

sneaking below the 100g/km CO2 emissions mark and into band-A.

Most manufacturers also now have an 'Eco' sub-branding for their lowest emission models – Vauxhall uses the ecoFLEX sub-branding.

Brilliant as they are, 'eco' models often cost more since they have diesel engines and special 'green' features that do not yet deliver the economy of scale savings available to makers across the whole model range.

What is more, saving road tax is not such a great incentive when many conventional superminis sit in the lowest road tax band of £35 a year anyway; over three years with an eco model, saving £105 is irrelevant if you spend far more on buying that car in the first place and are then putting expensive diesel in the tank.

So, check out conventional equivalents of eco models and don't dismiss petrol power; that fuel is still cheaper and makes sense for lower mileage users, while emission and consumption levels are closing the gap on diesel equivalents.

Diesel engines also tend to be heavier, so you could find yourself going through tyres more quickly.

Don't ignore alternative power options either, such as liquid petroleum gas (LPG) or hybrids.

Finally, just look again at what you have to part-exchange; you might have lost a packet in depreciation on that big 4x4, but work out what it will cost you to run it for the next three years – it might be a lot less than the cost of chopping it for a new car.

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Motability
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BY STEVE LOADER

SAVE money by downsizing and running a cheaper car and then gain even more by smarter driving and journey planning.

For a start, you can save pounds and wear and tear on the car by avoiding short journeys and perhaps get fitter too by walking or cycling; a cold engine can produce 60 per cent more pollution than a warm one and a car used for many short journeys needs extra servicing and wears its engine out faster.

More fuel is wasted and higher emissions are also generated from a cold start – traffic on UK roads contributes 26 per cent of the nation's total carbon dioxide emissions (CO2).

However, if your car journey is a must then follow these tips from the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) and RAC Foundation motoring watchdogs:

- Plan your route – forethought can save wear and tear on car and driver. Try to take the most direct route – a sat nav can help – and go off peak if possible. If you have to commute, think about car sharing, Park and Ride bus schemes or other public transport.

- Have your vehicle serviced regularly to maintain efficiency and economy. Under-serviced engines reduce fuel economy by ten per cent or more. Catalytic converters are environmentally friendly, but only when properly maintained.

- Check tyres – under-inflated tyres need replacing more often (itself an environmental problem), are dangerous and waste fuel. Anybody who has cycled on 'flabby' tyres knows what extra effort is involved, so check pressures weekly.

- Obey speed limits to save money and stay legal. Try to 'feather' the throttle as you reach cruising speed; 56mph uses 25 per cent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style will save fuel, but never coast in neutral or with clutch pedal depressed to save fuel – vehicle control must not be compromised.



TOP TIPS: Adopt our driving advice to save money and also think about downsizing to city cars like the Chevrolet Matiz (above) or the forthcoming Nissan Pixo (right)

Clever driving is key to cheaper motoring



to brake suddenly.

• Reverse in when

you park. When you start off again, the engine is cold and inefficient. If you can drive away smoothly without having to reverse, you save fuel and have better visibility.

• Be a tank miser. Why fill the tank to the brim and carry more weight than is necessary?

• If you are stuck in a jam then you are doing zero mpg – turn off the engine after two minutes to save fuel and emissions.

For more eco driving tips see Julie Maddocks' online video report at: <http://www.yourkenttv.co.uk/community>.

- Accelerate briskly without racing the engine – pulling away too fast uses up to 60 per cent more fuel. Intelligent gear changes at modest engine speeds can cut fuel consumption by up to 15 per cent.
- Reduce drag – remove roof racks and carriers when not in use. Driving with windows open also mars aerodynamics and lowers fuel economy. Remove unnecessary and heavy boot luggage and avoid heavy accessories and wide tyres that add rolling resistance. Air conditioning lowers fuel economy so use the fan and vents unassisted as much as possible.

- Buy green fuel and use less. Seek out low sulphur diesel (City diesel) or cleaner petrol (low sulphur/aromatics) supplies locally. Consider a conversion to LPG (liquid petroleum gas), which is half the price of petrol, generates almost as much power and emits much less CO2.

- Use 'accelerator sense'. Do you go straight from accelerator to the brake? You save fuel if you plan ahead and, rather than have to brake as you hit traffic, gently let the speed of the vehicle bring you to a halt as you join a queue. There is no point in rushing and then having

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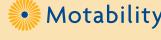
Cars shown for illustration purposes only. Finance subject to status. £35 road fund licence applies to Matiz 0.8 S. 1157.3mpg applies to Matiz 0.8 S.

Chevrolet range fuel consumption in mpg (L/100 km), urban 40.9 (6.9) to 26.4 (10.7), extra urban 67.3 (4.2) to 38.7 (7.3),

combined range 54.3 (5.2) to 32.8 (8.6) the official co2 emission is 119 to 225 g/km.

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Is diesel demand peaking?

By STEVE LOADER

DIESEL has become the fuel of choice recently as UK buyers seek to cut costs, but do the sums still add up?

Its original appeal was the cheapness of the fuel, greater mpg and the better low down pulling power of the engines and their ability to meet tighter emissions legislation.

However, diesel now commands an increasing premium against petrol and there are doubts whether the engines can continue to meet even tougher emission laws.

Meanwhile, petrol power has hit back with smaller, lighter and cleaner engines with turbocharging for extra flexibility, while there are other options emerging to save money and the planet:

• HYBRID

These partner conventional engines with electric units, but two powerplants and power supplies – fuel tank plus batteries – mean extra weight, while production complexity raises prices so buyers must cover many miles to balance this. Motorway mpg is also hardly better than a standard car.

• LPG

Liquid petroleum gas (LPG) seems an excellent alternative fuel due to lower duty and emissions and cheaper car tax.

However, the calorific value and consequent mpg is slightly lower than petrol and it will cost at least £1,500 to convert an existing vehicle via an approved LPG Association operator.

There are many more LPG filling points

across the country than before though – Kent has some 40 LPG sites – and LPG costs about half that of petrol and diesel at the pump, emits about 20 per cent less CO2 than petrol and slightly less than diesel and with fewer NOx and particulates.

• ELECTRIC

These should be cheap to run, but battery technology cannot yet guarantee ranges to

satisfy many would-be owners. There is the worry too that the car's emissions are simply transferred from an exhaust pipe to the chimney of a fossil fuel-burning power station.

• BIOFUELS

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appeals since plants absorb CO2 during growth and simply release it again when burned – a virtuous circle. Most road fuels sold in the UK will contain at least five per cent biofuel by next year anyway, but there is concern that using arable land or forest to grow 'biofuel' plants will strain global food supplies.



TAX TIP: Diesel ecoFLEX versions of the Vauxhall Corsa qualify for the lowest payable road tax (£35) and return more than 60mpg on average

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Mazda range: Urban 18.0 (15.7) – 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 31.0 (9.1) – 80.7 (3.5), Combined 24.6 (11.5) – 68.9 (4.3). CO2 emissions (g/km) 107 – 299.

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15R. . Model shown: Mazda3 2.0 Sd Sport. OTR price £16,257.. Mazda6 2.5 Sd Sport. OTR price £19,326. Mazda MX-5 Roadster Coupe 2.0i Sport. OTR

price £20,657. All models shown (excluding Mazda RX-8 R3) feature optional metallic/mica paint (£385). On the road prices include 15% VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, 1st registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. Details correct at time of going to print. All models now available with free 7 day drive away insurance.

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A smoking exhaust can really damage your motoring wealth

By **STEVE LOADER**

GOVERNMENT efforts to use road tax to beat drivers into giving up so-called gas guzzlers have met with mixed success.

There can be no doubt that escalating tax or vehicle excise duty (VED) over the past couple of years has helped fuel downsizing, but there was outcry after the March 2008 Budget at 'draconian' rates to be applied to larger cars, especially with the recession looming.

Consequently, Chancellor Alistair Darling

backtracked last November and proposed amended charges from April 1, 2009 to soften the blow at the top end of the market, though the Government says VED will continue to be amended in future to maintain downward force in vehicle sizes and emissions.

They will also continue to be based on CO2 emissions rather than fuel consumption and apply only to cars registered after March 1, 2001; inconsistent emissions data on older cars means these are taxed simply at £120/year if the engine is 1,549cc or less and then £185 if it is above – something of a bargain for the owners of large older 'gas guzzlers' if they are content to bear higher fuel bills, opt for a £1,500-2,000 LPG (liquid petroleum gas)

conversion or cover relatively few miles.

The new rates are weighted even more in favour of the latest, cleanest and most miserly small cars.

Models emitting 100g/km of CO2 or less like the new Ford Fiesta ECOnetic, for instance, continue to qualify for Band A or zero rating.

The payable steps are:

Bands B and C (101-120g/km)	£35
Bands D and E (121-140g/km)	£120
Band F (141-150g/km)	£125
Band G (151-160g/km)	£150
Band H and I (161-180g/km)	£175
Band J and K (181-225g/km)	£215
Band L (226-255g/km)	£405
Band M (255g/km plus)	£405



GREENER IS CHEAPER: All Hyundai i10 city cars (above left) qualify for the lowest road tax band (£35) and also come with a five-year warranty; and the low emissions of Skoda Fabia Greenline (above right) also attract only £35-a-year in road tax bills

To see this clip, search 'recycling' @ yourkenttv.co.uk



Julie Maddocks discovers how recycling can be not only good for the environment – but save you money

Essential guide to where you can save

- KOS is offering Pulsar Kinetic Watch at only £49.99 (inc p&p) no battery required, saving over 50 per cent on RRP
- A&A Gliderobes in Canterbury is offering up to £100 off
- Avinco Limited in Ramsgate is offering free consultation on digital TV
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Model shown is Fabia GreenLine 1.4 TDI PD 80bhp DPF at £10,253.04 RRP. **Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the Fabia GreenLine: Urban 53.3 (5.3), *Extra-urban 83.1 (3.4), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO₂ emissions for the Fabia GreenLine 109g/km.** Reduction applied to the RRP including factory fitted optional extras and is the equivalent of VAT at 15%. VAT is applicable and will be shown on the customer's invoice. Excludes Channel Islands. Offer subject to availability and may be amended or withdrawn at any time. Please see retailer for full terms and conditions.

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We take a look at how a school in Maidstone has introduced banking to show pupils how to manage money

Essential guide to where you can save

■ KOS is offering a leather organiser handbag by Jane Shilton for only £49.99 inc p&p saving £40 off RRP

■ Colgate Garage doors in Canterbury is offering 15 per cent off some garage doors

■ KOS is offering ultra-slim Danish Skagen watches for men and women only £69.99 saving £20 On the RRP

■ Maidstone Kia Motors in Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off all accessories

■ Aquasphere bathrooms store in Swalecliff is offering an accessories pack worth £100 with every new bathroom

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS



CASH-strapped businesses could be literally pouring money down the drain – by not taking simple steps to turn off the tap of water waste.

Sustainable business expert Envirowise is calling on businesses in the South East to take on board low-cost initiatives to reduce water consumption which it says could help save thousands of pounds every year.

With reports predicting water is set to become an increasingly scarce and expensive resource, and that UK businesses are using enough of it every year to fill 2.6 million Olympic-sized swimming pools, it says local businesses could be pouring money down the drain.

By **TONY PATEY**

To make it easy for businesses to introduce water-saving measures, Envirowise has launched a new step-by-step online tool that helps companies identify where and how water is used and treated, the costs involved, and practical ways to reduce and re-use it.

The tool also helps organisations keep control of costs and future proof against rate rises and supply shortages.

Last year Envirowise ran Rippleffect, a free initiative designed to help businesses tackle water use.

Around 500 businesses signed up for the scheme and it is hoped many more will benefit from water savings by using the new tool.

Holly Firmin, South East regional manager,

said: "While many of us consider water to be a cheap and endless resource, the reality is that we are using and wasting far too much, and this is placing extra pressure on existing supplies as well as impacting on the bottom line.

"It is crucial that people are aware of the serious and complex issues around water supply and use and we hope our new tool will help businesses address these challenges in the most effective way."

For details about the scheme visit www.envirowise.gov.uk/water.

Envirowise is a government-funded programme which aims to put sustainable use of resources at the top of the UK business agenda.

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By JEREMY GATES

THERE are probably two reasons why the annual pension of around £700,000 awarded to Sir Fred Goodwin, as he sidesteps the wreckage of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), is arousing such fury.

The first is that much of his cash could come from taxpayers, possibly for decades, because RBS pension schemes worldwide already face a near £2 billion deficit. RBS non-contributory pensions are fully guaranteed by the firm.

The second, is that while Goodwin hits the jackpot, some seven million workers in money purchase defined contribution (DC) pensions are seeing their retirement income slashed by the credit crunch, despite years of saving.

Private

Financial advisor Hargreaves Lansdown thinks the average employee saving £150 per month would take 209 years, allowing for investment growth and inflation, to match Sir Fred's pension pot, which RBS accrued for him since 1998. Meanwhile, those in DC schemes have seen their likely pension income slashed 20-25 per cent in the past 18 months.

Over-55s, in particular, feel powerless as markets slide because a full recovery before they retire is unlikely. How long will it take to recoup £50bn worth of share values in London one day this week?

To have any hope of a decent payout, workers must stick with pension saving through thick and thin. The eventual payout might be healthier than they fear – or expect.

Even Sir Fred needed a bit of luck at the end: if RBS had gone bust, he would have got a maximum pension of £27,000 a year. Those who make no private pension arrangements miss out particularly badly, if their employer is willing to pay into a pension on their behalf. Besides the boss's contribution, pensions are helped to grow over the years by tax relief.

Protecting your pension through the tough times

The dwindling number still in the private sector final salary pensions, mostly assume they don't have a problem. In fact, their fund may face a rising deficit, so it might be prudent for them to save more through an AVC (Additional Voluntary Contribution) scheme to boost their eventual pension income.

For others outside final salary schemes, an obvious vehicle for extra saving is a SIPP (Self-Invested Personal Pension), a concept devised in the early 90s. Many self-employed workers use a SIPP as their main pension plan.

Laith Khalaf, pension analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown (HL) says a "Bed and SIPP" enables savers to switch unwanted shares into a SIPP, with generous tax relief on top.

"HL figures suggest there are as many as 10 million private shareholders, many with shares from demutualisations," Khalaf says.

Basic rate payers putting £1,000 worth of shares into the SIPP get an additional £250 in tax relief, while higher rate taxpayers get up to another £250 back from the taxman.

"Markets and asset values move in a cyclical direction and every 10-15 years, something bad happens. In good times, people happily put money away, and in bad times, they don't."

"We should invest on a counter-cyclical basis. The fact is that Government – regardless of party – will soon raise taxes, particularly income tax and National Insurance, to handle vast debts building up, so it is vital to use the tax shelter which pensions provide.

"At the very least, put spare money into a

pension pot, to hold it there as cash until you find an attractive investment. In pensions invested in managed funds, you might step up contributions to buy in at the lower price," Khalaf says.

Malcolm Cuthbert at financial advisor Killik & Co says some savers fatten up SIPP either by putting in ISA money currently earning a low interest rate, or a lump sum generated by cashing in a poorly performing endowment.

He cites the example of a higher rate taxpayer at 50 moving £8,000 from an ISA into a SIPP who receives £2,000 tax relief immediately, and can claim back £2,000 through his tax return, so a net £6,000 outlay produces an extra £10,000 in the pension.

The average sum held in SIPP is around £50,000, but Cuthbert says it is important to check each investment inside it to ensure good performance. Switching to a better performing fund might involve no charges.

State

Next, we come to the State pension: those with a full NI contribution record can count on £90.70 per week, and in many cases will collect more. From 2010, the minimum number of years' work required to qualify for a full basic State Pension falls to 30.

For a prediction on your state pension, check with the Department of Work and Pensions at 0845 300 0168 and at www.thepensionservice.gov.uk. Khalaf says people may be tempted to lessen the impact of this downturn

by delaying their pension by two or three years, and living on savings or part-time work in between.

When retirement actually arrives, savers in DC pensions should use the open market option (OMO) to find the most generous annuity, instead of merely accepting the quotation from their pension provider.

Steve Hunt, at Rockingham Retirement, reckons pensioners lose £1.4bn a year by failing to do this. Figures from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) indicate that 169,000 retirees turned down an annuity offered by their pension provider in 2008 and presumably found something better elsewhere, just over a third of the total annuity market.

"Research shows that those approaching retirement can increase their income by more than 20 per cent by shopping around, compared to the default option," Hunt says.

Finally, it is worth remembering that the bleaker prospects might appear in the pension sector, the more likely it is that new products will enter the field.

Next week, Prudential launches its New Income Choice Annuity, available for clients with pension pots of at least £10,000 after tax-free cash has been taken. It will enable savers to select a starting income which can be varied over time.

If Prudential's new product catches on, rivals will respond. As the older population grows, pensioners have a bit more bargaining clout than they realise.

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Essential guide to where you can save

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

For poorer and poorer

BY MELANIE DEN BRINKER

THERE have been a spate of recent headlines about highly paid people trying to renegotiate so-called 'big money' divorce settlements they can no longer afford as the bonus culture declines.

So it's not surprising divorce lawyers are seeing a marked increase in the number of previously high-earning men seeking to reduce maintenance payments to their ex-wives.

They believe that, having shared in the good times, their ex-spouses should now share in the bad.

Although orders for the payment of ongoing maintenance are variable, orders dividing capital assets have historically not, save in rare and unforeseen circumstances, been variable, even where there is a change in financial circumstances.

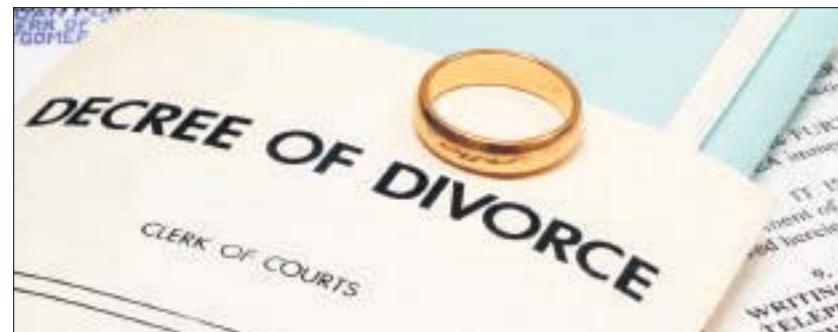
Where does this leave previously wealthy divorced couples whose capital assets were valued and subsequently divided shortly before the credit crunch hit, and who may now be looking at a reduction in the value of some of their assets by as much as 90 per cent?

In many cases this ill fortune will be shared between the parties.

However, often the wife will have received the bulk of the 'copper-bottomed' assets, including the former matrimonial home, while the husband retains a larger percentage of the risk-laden assets such as shares, options or even possible future bonuses.

In such cases, while the wife may be facing a fall in the value of her assets, it may be as nothing to that faced by the ex-husband.

How the recession could see divorce settlements head back to the court room



The result may be that he ends up with significantly less capital than the ex-wife.

For such ex-couples, the outcome of an application made to the Court of Appeal by Bryan Myerson, a city fund manager may have huge implications.

He has asked the Court of Appeal for leave to apply to reopen a divorce settlement finalised in March last year, whereby he was ordered to pay 43 per cent of a total £25.8 million assets to his wife.

She received £9.5m cash, while he retained most of his shares. Since the settlement, the value of his shares has plummeted by 90 per cent.

The result is Mrs Myerson will hold 105 per cent of the couple's assets, while Mr Myerson, who would have to borrow to pay the £2.5m that he still owes, will be half-a-million

pounds out of pocket rather than retaining £14.6m, as had been anticipated at the time of the settlement.

She opposes the application, with her lawyer predicting that, if allowed, it will open the floodgates to applications by many other men in a similar position.

Indeed, Jim Moore, the so called 'buy-to-let king' has already announced he will represent himself in an attempt to reopen his divorce settlement on the grounds the fall in property values has made it unaffordable.

Whether or not they are successful remains to be seen, but what is clear is that in these difficult times, divorce will increasingly be seen to be for poorer as well as for richer.

• Melanie den Brinker is a solicitor at leading Kent solicitors Buss Murton, with offices in Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook and Dartford.

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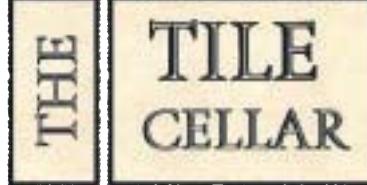
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Don't let the financial climate be a taxing time for your relationship

CREDIT-crunched couples can cut down their tax burden and ease the stress caused to relationships by the economic slump.

The charity Relate has highlighted financial pressures as causing potential relationship problems – but tax should not be an extra issue.

In fact, couples who work together in planning their tax affairs can save tax and so keep much-needed cash available.

These savings mainly apply to married couples and civil partnerships, to whom special rules apply, but some can also apply to unmarried couples.

The tax savings available depend on making the best use of both partners':

- annual tax allowances;
- lower and basic rate tax bands;
- exemptions on transfers of assets between them, so enabling the best use of tax losses.

Mostly the savings will reduce current liabilities, but there will be cases where refunds of tax from previous years may be claimed.

Make full use of income tax allowances. Interest returns are low at present but if only one spouse is in paid work, putting savings in the name of the other makes use of their personal allowance.

BY PAUL HODGE

This tip will remain worthwhile even when interest rates recover if the account-holder does not resume employment.

Where one spouse is the main earner, forming a company or partnership can enable the profits to be shared between both.

Again, this makes use of both personal allowances and, if the main earner expects to have assessable income of more than £43,875 in the year 2009-10, he or she will pay higher rate tax unless some of that can be transferred to the other spouse.

This can be done by:

- employing the spouse and paying him/her a reasonable wage for the work done;
- giving the spouse shares in the company and paying dividends;
- making the spouse a partner in the business.

'Bed and breakfasting', commonly by one spouse selling and the other buying shares whose value has risen, is usually done to reduce future capital gains tax by using annual exemptions.

But not all shares will be standing at a loss and many people who have sold shares before they fell to below their original cost will have made taxable gains on those shares.

If their gains are more than the annual exemption, but they have other shares that are showing a loss, bed and breakfasting the loss-making shares can create a loss that will reduce or eliminate the CGT on gains already realised.

If one spouse is about to sell an asset and the other has already made capital losses, the asset can be transferred to the spouse with the losses before selling, so that those losses reduce the taxable capital gain. A similar arrangement can work if a higher rate taxpay-

er is about to cash in an insurance policy. Chargeable event gains are liable to higher rates but if the policy is first transferred to a spouse who does not pay higher rate tax, the tax bill can be reduced.

• Paul Hodge is a partner at accountants and business advisors Baker Tilly, which has offices in Bromley and Tunbridge Wells.



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Put yourself ahead of the game when searching for a new job

GETTING a new job these days is tough in the extreme – recent reports say anything up to 60 people are going for jobs which wouldn't even make a tiny blip on the radar in normal economic times.

So when it comes to looking for new jobs it's essential you know a little about the companies you apply to.

That would put you in pole position, at least when it comes to interviews.

By understanding a company you will be able to know more about the kind of work they do, if it suits you, whether you're the right person for the job, what qualities they're looking for in job applicants – and crucially also how you should position yourself in your CV and cover letters.

Using relevant information during the application process will show potential employers you have researched their company, understand them and are keen to work for them specifically.

Susan Yallop, a director at recruitment firm Adecco, has set out some tips on how to find background information on potential employers, helping to make the job-seeking process a lot more targeted and potentially successful.

Company websites

Company websites are a great place for you to start your research – nearly every company now has a web page, which will include information about the organisation, what they offer as a business and its aims and ethos.

BY **TONY PATEY**

This is the best place to start when building up your knowledge as it gives you an overall flavour of the company. Downloading company reports can offer a good insight into the direction the business is moving in; this will offer you strong background knowledge should you be offered an interview.

Get online

The internet is a great place for finding information on a company and its recent news and announcements.

While the company website may offer some information on the company, looking for its presence online with relevant newswires and national and trade publications will give you a more comprehensive impression of what it has done in the past 12 months, the direction the company appears to be moving in and how it is competing in its market.

Social networking

This is not just a way of sharing photos and chatting with friends. A number of companies use social networking for business purposes.

While some use the sites for a communal place for employees to chat and share information, there are a number of companies who have started to use these sites for recruitment purposes.

Sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter might be just the thing to help you to find information on companies and job openings while staying up to date with specific industries.

From the horse's mouth

While external sources are all useful they don't offer an inside perspective, only news that a company has released or been involved in.

If you have a friend or an acquaintance who has either worked for or in some way been involved with a company, they can be extremely valuable.

While this information source isn't essential, personal recommendations and incite offer a huge bonus as you can learn about working culture and everyday goings on at any companies that might be of interest.

If you don't ask you don't get

If you are struggling to find out about the company don't be afraid to call the main help desk and ask for company brochures or advice as to where you can find out more.

HR may even be able to supply you with a more detailed job description.

Competitors

It can be worthwhile researching the companies that compete in the same space as the organisation you are looking to work for.

It will impress the employer if you can demonstrate knowledge of the key players and offer an opinion on the industry as a whole.

Ms Yallop said: "Obviously, companies always try to give the best impression of themselves through various formats but by investigating a number of avenues you will be able to get a much clearer and rounded impression of the image and culture that each company is trying to promote and aspire to."

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Blakes Hair & Beauty in Canterbury is offering 30 per cent off all colours with full price cut and blow dry

■ Maidstone Kia in Maidstone is offering a free set of mats with any new car purchased before May 31

■ KOS is offering all seasons duck duvet, two duvets that button together from only £39.99. Save more than 50 per cent

■ Wildlife Heritage Foundation Animal Park in Ashford is offering an amazing day being close to big cats. All day dedicated guide with buffet lunch, tea/coffee for only £99

■ Pomphreys Motors in Bapchild, Sittingbourne is offering a car rental deal when you book one day you get the second free

■ Robins and Day Motors in Maidstone, Canterbury and Rochester are offering MOTs from £39.99. Service and MOT from £129.99 and seasonal checks from £19.99

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BY JEREMY GATES

IF NEW figures detailing our personal borrowings are even vaguely accurate, Gordon Brown isn't alone in convincing himself the best way out of any financial squeeze is to step up the spending.

Professional advice website Unbiased.co.uk says personal loan debt rose by over £1.6 billion to £11.4bn during 2008.

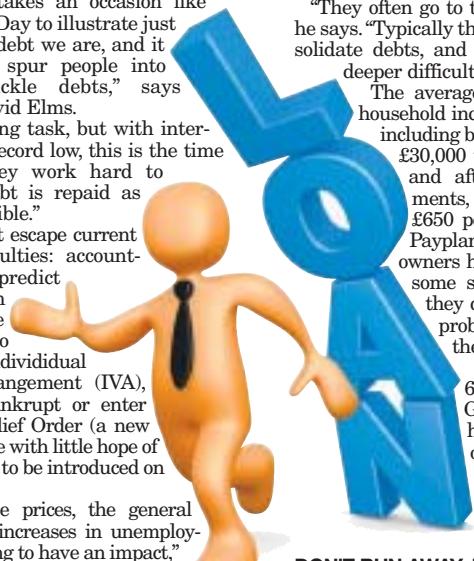
The website nominated March 25 as Debt Freedom Day – and reckons we worked for the first 83 days of the year to earn the money to service interest charges on our debts, despite the fact that credit card debt actually fell by just over £4.9bn during 2008.

"Perhaps it takes an occasion like Debt Freedom Day to illustrate just how deeply in debt we are, and it will hopefully spur people into action to tackle debts," says spokesman David Elms.

"It's a daunting task, but with interest rates at a record low, this is the time to make money work hard to ensure any debt is repaid as quickly as possible."

Many will not escape current financial difficulties: accountants KPMG predict more than 150,000 people are likely to enter into an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA), be declared bankrupt or enter into a Debt Relief Order (a new option for people with little hope of repaying debts) to be introduced on April 6, 2009.

"Falling house prices, the general downturn and increases in unemployment are starting to have an impact," says Mark Sands, KPMG's director of personal insolvency.



DON'T RUN AWAY: Tackle debts, and now is a good time with current interest rates low

Our personal debt is out of control

"Whilst consumers fight to keep their jobs and homes, for those that lose both there is often little reason for someone with debts and assets not to declare themselves bankrupt."

John Fairhurst at Payplan, a free debt advice and solutions service started in the early 1990s to offer insolvency solutions to public sector workers, says in many cases people fail to realise they are in trouble until it is too late.

"They often go to the wrong place for help," he says. "Typically they fix another loan to consolidate debts, and find themselves in even deeper difficulties before long."

The average Payplan client has net household income of £1,700 per month, including benefits. They are sitting on £30,000 worth of unsecured debts and after meeting all commitments, face a shortfall of about £650 per month. Around half of Payplan clients who are homeowners have paid the mortgage at some stage by credit card, and they don't tell creditors of their problems for fear of losing their credit card.

Since August, 2008, the 600-strong Payplan team in Grantham, Lincolnshire, has seen a sharp rise of owner/occupiers in trouble.

Unemployment and redundancy have not yet figured largely in the cases it is handling.

Although the group with the most problems is aged 35-45, the sector seeing the fastest rise in problems is older – in the 50-60 bracket.

The average owner-occupier in trouble has a net monthly income of £2,100 and unsecured debts of £41,000, including credit cards, personal loans, and car loans, creating a monthly deficit of about £950.

Fairhurst says they have been hit particularly hard by the clampdown on credit in 2008, and the end of easy remortgaging caused by the plunge in house prices. For many, the escape routes are cut off.

Payplan's initial strategy is to bring the household budget back into balance: creditors are requested to stop adding interest and other charges, if clients agree to pay an affordable monthly sum to each creditor.

About a third of Payplan clients agree to a repayment arrangement, with six out of seven choosing Debt Management Plans (DMPs) and the remainder opting for Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs).

Debt Relief Orders is a third, simpler option to reduce the administrative work triggered by the great debt mountain. Fairhurst believes they will be offered to people with debts below £15,000, no assets and minimal income, and little hope of paying anything off.

On payment of a £90 fee, debtors will have debts written off, and will find it extremely difficult to get credit in the future.

Some debt problems are solved informally, without using any of these vehicles. Around five to six per cent of Payplan customers take advice on making contractual repayments and handle their own financial arrangements thereafter.

Essential guide to where you can save

- Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £100 off Elevating TV cabinets
- Old Sawmills furniture store in Ashford is offering 20 per cent off all showroom items
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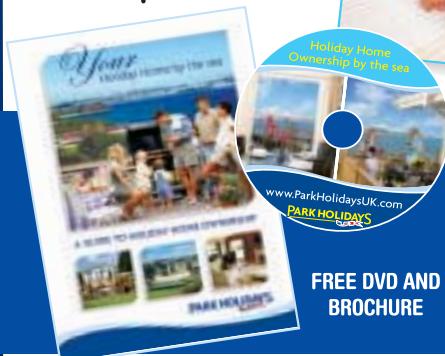


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- 4 Frenchman's Beach Rye Harbour
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Vin Diesel and Paul Walker return with the latest Fast and Furious thriller. Fugitive ex-con Dom Toretto (Diesel) is forced to hook up with his old adversary, agent Brian O'Conner, to confront a shared enemy.

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How petite Reese rose to meet a monster challenge

■ BY LAURA HARDING

IT would be too easy to dismiss Reese Witherspoon as another Hollywood blonde. While the Southern belle's impish looks could have guaranteed her a success in romantic comedies, Reese has chosen a more unconventional path.

From Pleasantville, about a pair of 1990s teenage siblings who are magically transported into 1950s, to her performance as June Carter Cash in the critically acclaimed Walk The Line, Reese has been drawn to unconventional roles.

Her latest challenge, voicing the part of Susan/Ginormica, a girl-turned-monster in new 3D animation Monsters vs Aliens, reflects her tendency not to fit in.

Susan is an ordinary girl planning her wedding when she is hit by a meteorite and turned into a giant. She is then dragged off to a secret government compound and has to fight evil aliens that are trying to take over the world.

Along the way Susan has to come to terms with who she is and accept and embrace the fact that she is different. As if that wasn't enough, Susan is locked in the compound with other monsters that the government doesn't know what to do with. At first she is repulsed but as the film goes on she learns to love them.

"Through the journey of the film, Susan starts to value and appreciate the monster crew for the support that they give her – the love, the companionship, the understanding that they have of the situation," Reese says.

"She has come to terms with the fact that she can't really go home again in the same way. She'll never be just Susan Murphy from Modesto.



ACTING GIANT: Hollywood's 5ft 1in Reese Witherspoon

"At first that kind of depresses her, but then, through the help of the Monsters, she realises it's a little awesome to be different. They all value each other for their qualities, and they kind of form this offbeat family."

The film's powerful message about being an outsider was partly what drew Reese to the role.

"I think it's great that this movie has a message that no matter how weird you feel you definitely have a place in this world and sometimes that can be your greatest benefit," she says.

However much she loved the script, being a giant superhero was tough for 5ft 1in Reese, who had to channel all her efforts into sounding like she could take on an evil alien.

"They kept on saying, 'Be more like Arnold

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Schwarzenegger or Sylvester Stallone, say it in that tagline way – "I am Ginormica!" and I couldn't do it, I sounded like a robot."

Reese also reveals that her two children – Ava, nine, and Deacon, five (both from her marriage to Cruel Intentions co-star Ryan Phillippe, whom she divorced in 2006) – are huge fans of the film and both had insightful interpretations of its deeper meaning.

"I was driving them home from the theatre and I said to my kids, 'So what do you guys think is the message of the movie?' And my daughter very thoughtfully said, 'I think it's a movie about never letting someone underestimate you and always living up to your true potential'. I said 'You're so astute Ava, yes that's exactly what it's about'.

MONSTERS V ALIENS 
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PROPERTY NEWS

You say high council tax gives poor value

NEARLY 90 per cent of UK residents are unhappy with the services they receive in exchange for council tax, a new survey has revealed.

The poll of 4,800 homeowners and private tenants shows a third of people describing their local council as out of touch.

Eighty-six per cent of people oppose a revaluation of council tax bands.

Only seven per cent of respondents to the survey, by propertyfinder.com, expressed satisfaction with their local council and said they did not mind paying the tax.

"The average council tax has risen 74 per cent over the past ten years, while inflation has risen just under 20 per cent, but for many, services haven't improved," said Charles Wasdell, head of research at propertyfinder.com.

"Despite massive rises in council tax, people overwhelmingly feel they get poorer value for money from local council."

Rental market value is back on the move

THE rental market has begun to show signs of recovery over the past three months, according to the findaproerty rental index.

The research shows the trend of falling asking prices and rising stock has slowed in the last quarter, with rental prices falling just -0.4 per cent in March, the lowest fall for six months.

Supply also slowed, with stock rising 1.9 per cent, the lowest monthly increase since September 2008, and well below the 12 per cent high seen in other months.

Average rents for March were £827 pcm, compared with £830 pcm in February, with tenant activity reducing the average time a property is on the market by five days over the month.

Andrew Smith, head of research, said: "The UK rental market over the past year has been a story of rising supply levels outstripping tenant demand, which in turn has led to falling rental asking prices.

"There now seems to be some evidence that this downward spiral is slowing and as such we may be reaching the bottom of the market.

"Economic instability and low consumer confidence mean it is impossible to predict what will happen to the rental market over the coming months; however, we believe that there are signs that we may start to see supply levels tighten and rents begin to rise towards the end of 2009."



Why mortgage arrears make tenants homeless



INNOCENT: Tenants currently have no rights and are evicted when landlords default on mortgage payments

House prices show slight increase

HOUSE prices rose for the first time since the autumn of 2007 last month. But experts are now warning there may be further falls and the crisis in the economy is not at an end.

According to the Nationwide, the price of a typical house rose by 0.9 per cent in March.

This brings the price of the average house to £150,946, the first rise since October 2007.

Fionnuala Earley, Nationwide's chief economist, said: "It would be unwise to

draw strong conclusions from the slowdown in the annual rate of fall."

David Smith, senior partner at Dreweatt Neate estate agents, said: "Nobody is going to pop the Champagne corks quite yet."

Mortgage approvals were up in February, after months of decline, while buyer interest in the market has also been rising.

"People are genuinely looking again, sensing now could be the opportunity of a lifetime," Mr Neate added.

■ BY NICK AMES

FOUR housing charities have launched a campaign to stop tenants being kicked on to the streets because their landlord has defaulted on mortgage payments.

Shelter, Citizens Advice, Crisis and the Chartered Institute of Housing, have teamed up to help the growing number of private tenants facing eviction through no fault of their own.

The organisations are calling for a change in the law to allow courts the power to defer repossession to allow tenants to find other suitable accommodation.

Currently most private tenants have no legal rights, which means they can lose their home without notice.

The housing charities say they have heard of cases where tenants' belongings have been put out on the street and the locks have been changed.

Shelter chief executive Adam Sampson said: "Shelter has seen a steep rise in the number of tenants who have kept their side of the bargain by paying their rent, but who are being thrown out on to the street because their landlords have defaulted on the mortgage and the house has been repossessed.

"With more and more landlords struggling with mortgage arrears and tenants facing repossession, the Government must allow the courts to defer possession dates so that tenants can find other suitable accommodation."

Members of the joint campaign are calling for the law to be changed to give courts the discretion to take into account the circumstances of sitting tenants where an outright possession order is granted, and defer possession for a limited period of time.

The charities have written to MPs urging them to sign an Early Day Motion, calling for changes to the law.

They estimate thousands of tenants in the private rented sector could be at risk of losing their homes in this way and are warning urgent Government action is needed to avoid a potential crisis.

Sarah Webb, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing, said: "Much of the Government's focus so far during this recession has been on supporting homeowners through a number of means.

"Whilst we welcome these initiatives, we are concerned that tenants in the private rented sector are being left to the mercy of market forces.

"With the worst of the recession yet to come it is important that the three million households living in the sector are afforded basic legal protection when their landlords become the latest victims of the repossession crisis."

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KING'S HILL OFFICE | 01732 222211



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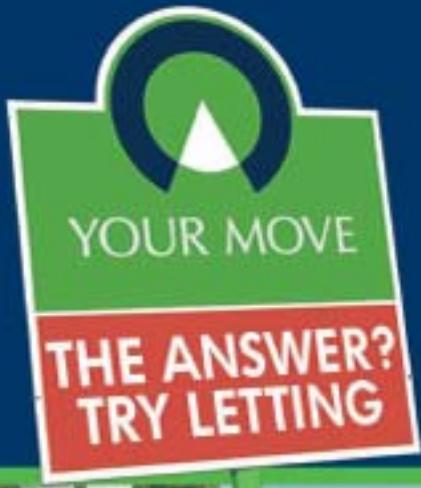
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Maidstone OIEO £185,000

3 bed semi-det house with lounge/diner. Kitchen and rear garden. Garage.

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Wateringbury OIEO £170,000

2 bed terrace cott, plot of land to the side offering development potential.

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45 Mangravet Avenue, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9BE

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Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts take place.



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Terrace house near town centre. 2 beds, lounge/diner, c/heating, d/glazing, parking.

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**KINGS HILL £275,000**

Award winning development of Kings Hill. The "Greenway" development by "Hillreed Homes" offers a range of traditional homes in a development surrounded by the Kent countryside.

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PUBLIC NOTICE**Maidstone £120,000****PROPERTY ADDRESS: 56 ARUNDEL****SQUARE, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME15 6HB**

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**MAIDSTONE OIEO £185,000**

This home benefits from a re-fitted kitchen and bathroom. Driveway, garage and gas c/heating and a 23' double aspect lounge/dining room. The rear garden is approximately 55'.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE ASKING PRICE £219,950**

Modern EOT built by Bryant homes and benefiting from 3 beds, 1 ensuite, double aspect living room with d/glazed French doors to garden. Dining room, fitted kitchen and cloakroom. Parking.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £125,000**

2 bed terraced home with 2 receptions. The lounge has an open brick fireplace and there is also GCH. Partial d/glazing and rear garden. There is no forward chain.

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**EAST MALLING £469,950**

5 bedroom chalet bungalow. Grd floor extension with a double bedroom, shower room and utility which could be utilised as a kitchen. Property backs onto farmland and viewing recommended.

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**MAIDSTONE OIEO £300,000**

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**MAIDSTONE OIEO £175,000**

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Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE, £199,950**

3 bed modern family home over 3 floors. 2 receptions, cloakroom, kitchen/breakfast room, master bedroom with ensuite. Situated in a popular cul-de-sac location with allocated parking.

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**WEST MALLING £299,995**

Converted 2 bed single roundel east with garden. Scope to install 2nd floor within the roundel to create additional bedroom subject to planning. This individual home is worthy of internal viewing.

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**LARKFIELD £184,995**

4 bed end of terraced home with a shaker style kitchen, d/room with open fire and separate double aspect lounge. GCH, d/glazing and approx 80' rear garden. Viewing recommended.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE ASKING PRICE £219,950**

3 bed three storey home with 2 shower rooms & 1 bathroom. This home is located in a small cul-de-sac just off Union Street in the heart of town. Garage & parking, GCH and d/glazing.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**PENENDEN HEATH £250,000**

3 bed Edwardian home with a 19' extended contemporary kitchen, a cellar utilised as a utility room and two reception rooms. An early viewing is strongly recommended.

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**MAIDSTONE £135,000**

3 bedroom semi detached home with double glazing and gas central heating. There is a lounge and separate dining room together with off road parking and no forward chain.

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**HUNTON OIEO £300,000**

4 bed country cottage with kitchen/diner with oak flooring and vaulted ceiling. Living room with open fireplace and sitting room. Utility, shower room and bathroom. Viewing essential.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE, £119,950**

2 bed end of terraced home in a courtyard style development over 3 floors, modern kitchen, bathroom but does require some work. Two loft rooms with separate staircases. No forward chain.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE OIEO £175,000**

2 bed end of terraced Victorian cottage, 2 receptions, cellar and a 1st floor bathroom. Rear garden, converted garage with GCH. Viewing is essential.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £142,500**

A two bedroom ragstone terraced with two reception rooms and a converted double chamber cellar. Other benefits include gas central heating, double glazing and no forward chain.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £115,000**

A two bedroom lower ground floor apartment situated in the town centre. There are two good size bedrooms, lounge, kitchen and bathroom. This property is offered with no forward chain.

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Maidstone £83,950	Maidstone £249,995	Larkfield £325,000	Maidstone £115,000	Barming £154,995	Maidstone £129,995
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Bed Ground Floor Maisonette • Garden, Double Glazing • Gas Central Heating • No Onward Chain!! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Bedroom Semi Detached Home • Extended Kitchen, Mote Park Area • 16" Lounge, Dining Room • Corner Plot Location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Bedroom Town House • Views onto Lakes • Three Bathrooms, Garage • Off Road Parking, Rear Garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 bedroom period conversion • Open plan lounge/kitchen • Double bedroom, Electric heating • Close to town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 bedroom terrace • Modern fitted kitchen • Gas central heating • Off road parking, No chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Bedroom purpose built GF flat • Ensuite to master bedroom • 14'3" Lounge, Garage • Viewing highly recommended

Tel: 0845 8732419 • maidstone@connells.co.uk

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Bairstow eves

Maidstone 01622 691554

maidstone@bairstoweves.co.uk

Countrywide

Maidstone £84,995 One bedroom flat for sale, parking, lounge/ diner, bedroom, hallway & bathroom plus kitchen.	Maidstone £114,995 This apartment has river views, lounge/diner, two bedrooms, parking. A definite must-see.	Maidstone £124,995 Accommodation includes hall, kitchen, lounge/diner, 2 bedrooms & bathroom. A viewing is recommended.	Eccles £149,995 Near the village of Aylesford comprises Lounge, dining room, kitchen & hall, 3 bedrooms and bathroom. Chain free.	Maidstone £149,995 2 bedrooms modern style house in cul de sac, lounge, kitchen/diner, hall, cloakroom and bathroom.
Maidstone £189,995 Three bedroom semi detached family home, reception, hallway, kitchen/diner, lounge & dining room, parking.	Harrietsham £214,995 Three bedroom detached house, two reception rooms, kitchen, conservatory, cloakroom, bathroom and en suite.	Maidstone £224,995 Lounge, dining area, office, breakfast area open to the kitchen. Three bedrooms plus en suite, bathroom and cloakroom.	Harrietsham £249,995 Three bedroom bungalow in Harrietsham village, garage and driveway, lounge/dining room, kitchen and shower room.	Penenden Heath £499,995 Detached family home, cul de sac position, executive home in Penenden Heath. Must be viewed.

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MOTORS NEWS



Kit cars look attractive proposition in recession

MANUFACTURERS of kit cars could prosper from the credit crunch, says the organiser of Easter's Kit Car Show at the Kent Showground, Detling this weekend.

John Cooke said: "Many people budgeting up to £20,000 for a weekend fun car before the recession could now shop for a good quality two-seat roadster kit car that will set them back just £8,000."

Local kit firms include Cobra lookalike (as pictured) builder, Hawk Cars (Frant), AEON (Marden), Blaze (Otham), Cranbrook Kitcars and GKD (Maidstone).



Start-stop is real boost to Fiat star's eco cred

FIAT has a new 'Start&Stop' system for the 1.2-litre junior petrol engine on its 500 cult car.

It automatically turns the engine off when the vehicle stops and the driver selects neutral, restarting when the clutch pedal is depressed for gear selection and driving away. Fiat says Start&Stop can boost economy in town from 44.1mpg to 49.6mpg and cut emissions.

This (£9,500) 500 version also comes with MP3 compatibility, air-con, 15-inch alloys and remote audio controls.



A 'redundancy-proof' deal tabled by Volvo

VOLVO reckons fear of redundancy is a major barrier to car buying now so it has added free unemployment, life, accident and sickness protection to financial deals on its C30 hatchback coupé and S40 saloon (pictured) and V50 estate, including low emission DRIVe versions.

The free Payment Protection Insurance (PPI) covers all monthly payments due on the finance agreement for up to 12 months if needed. The deal runs until June 30 this year through participating dealerships and relevant Volvo Car Finance.



LITTLE BUT LARGE: Despite compact dimensions the Mercedes A-Class feels huge inside with excellent head and legroom with a boot that can be adjusted between two heights

Spacious Merc A-Class outgrows its pigeonhole

DOWNSIZING could open up new sales for the Mercedes-Benz A-Class after a midlife makeover.

Part of the problem before was the current A-Class – launched in 2005 – being pigeonholed with junior models from BMW 1-Series and Audi A3, while unable to match the driving appeal and cachet of these sporting hatchbacks.

On the other hand, it can look expensive (from £14,000) against mainstream small MPVs, yet the Merc is really in a 'class' of its own – a clever three or five-door holdall for buyers aiming to downsize, but keep a posh badge.

In a driving context it also delivers more than most small MPV rivals without a significant ride penalty.

The steering can lack feedback, but the A-Class is a paragon of safety and security when pushed and the latest facelift has enhanced the front end with new headlamps and bumper, plus extra brightwork for the upmarket Elegance and Avantgarde trims.

Despite compact dimensions, the A-Class feels huge inside with superb head and legroom in the back, without robbing the car of boot space. The boot can also be adjusted quickly

ROAD TEST MERCEDES A-CLASS

■ BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

ly between two heights to deliver a fully flat 'van' floor with extra compartment beneath when the rear seats are folded, or a deeper boot with the floor in the lower position.

The cabin feels staid, but well made, with good storage and a well-arranged dash.

Standard equipment on our smart sports trim 1.7-litre petrol Avantgarde is generous, but it has a typically hefty £17,626 price tag and speccing up with the desirable Luxury Package – leather seats, auto climate control, heated front seats and electrically adjustable front seats – take it to more than £19,000.

But Mercedes is generous elsewhere; our car was a new BlueEfficiency eco-friendly model that sells for around the same as a standard model – unlike the premiums charged for eco versions produced by other manufacturers.

And you start saving immediately with up to eight per cent better economy, lower emissions and lower road tax in most cases – plus a lighter conscience.

Ours is capable of an average mpg in the mid-40s and there is no discernable price to pay in terms of driving enjoyment, performance or comfort – the best way to deliver the green message.



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Optional final payment	5835.00		
Credit Arrangement fee	240.00	APR	10%

USED CAR LISTING

2009	MG	TF	LE 500	2 DOOR	BLUE	1,000 MILES	£15,495.00
2008	MG	TF	LE 500	2 DOOR	BLACK	4,000 MILES	£14,995.00
2005	MG	ZT	2.0 CDTI	4 DOOR	BLACK	15,000 MILES	£7,495.00
2004	ROVER	75	2.0 SE CDT EST	5 DOOR	WHITE	46,494 MILES	£6,995.00
2004	ROVER	75	2.0 SE CDTI	4 DOOR	BLUE	33,585 MILES	£6,995.00
2006	FORD	FUSION	1.6 ZETEC AUTO	5 DOOR	BLUE	2,431 MILES	£6,950.00
2006	MG	ZR	1.4	5 DOOR	BLUE	39,737 MILES	£5,995.00
2004	MG	TF	1.8	2 DOOR	GREY	27,000 MILES	£5,995.00
2006	MG	ZR	1.4	3 DOOR	SILVER	30,298 MILES	£5,750.00
2005	MG	ZR 160	1.8	5 DOOR	GREY	50,912 MILES	£5,750.00
2006	FORD	FIESTA	1.2 STYLE	3 DOOR	SILVER	15,801 MILES	£5,650.00
2004	MG	ZR	2.0 TD	5 DOOR	BLACK	50,912 MILES	£4,995.00
2004	MG	ZR	1.4	5 DOOR	BLACK	34525 MILES	£4,995.00
2004	MG	ZT	1.8	4 DOOR	RED	33,391 MILES	£4,995.00
2002	MG	TF	1.8	2 DOOR	BLUE	47,500 MILES	£4,750.00



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USED CAR ROUND-UP:
OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE SUPERMINIS

AS more people downsize their car and their fuel and road tax bills, chances are that one or all of the following popular used superminis will be on their shopping list. Year in, year out they are the UK's most consistent best-sellers - a growing trend in the current economic climate. The trio are also excellent all-rounders, but a word of warning: as second-hand car prices harden, make sure you don't pay more than it would cost to keep your old car longer or trade up to a new car.

FORD FIESTA



FORD'S hugely successful supermini has marched on with a new model launched in late 2008, but don't expect weaker used prices; the credit crunch, rising fuel prices and draconian road taxes have made the Fiesta a top target for its reliability, decent driving experience, engines to suit all pockets and three and five-door body styles. Ford has also regularly produced special and limited editions laden with extra goodies, offering plenty more choice and there is even a hot ST model.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

RENAULT CLIO



DOWNSIZING can be sensible and chic with the Clio and the most recent generations have married durability and driving fun with Gallic charm. Again, the option of three or five doors is a big selling point, but our French contender also has the bonus of excellent diesel versions, though the cost of the actual fuel versus petrol argues against it currently. The Clio design has tended to be highly practical as well as charming, with good space for rear passengers.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

VAUXHALL CORSA



VAUXHALL'S Corsa was created to attack the Fiesta, yet has never quite achieved the volumes of its rival. Nevertheless, it offers similar virtues, plus a greater range of engines including a punchy and frugal three-cylinder petrol engine now in greater demand due to these straitened times. Several generations of Corsa followed a 'teardrop' body style, but the latest car is bigger and more aggressively sculpted - almost a 'supersize supermini' - with a sporty VXR version too.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

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09 58 HONDA JAZZ 1.4 SE AUTO PAS AIR/C MET GREY 1800 MILES	£10995
09 58 PEUGEOT 207 SE PREMIUM 1.6 AUTO 5DR A/C BLACK 999MILES	£10995
09 58 PEUGEOT 207 SPORT 1.6 AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C BLACK 2000 MILES	£9995
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FIAT Punto 1.2 Active , 5 Dirs, Manual, HB, Petrol, 2004 04 Reg, 50,000 miles, White, 2 Owners	£2,995
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PEUGEOT 206 1.9 D L , 5 Doors, Manual, Hatchback, Diesel, 1999 , 54,000 miles, Silver, PAS, Drivers airbag, Service indicator, Trip computer	£1,995
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ROVER 75 1.8 Classic SE , 4 Dirs, Manual, Saloon, Petrol, 2000 X Reg, 46,000 miles, Blue, 2 Owners, F/S/H	£1,995
MITSUBISHI PAJERO 2.5 TURBO DIESEL , 5 Dr, Automatic, Station Wagon, Diesel, 2002 J Reg , 170,000 km, Blue	£1,995
VAUXHALL Vectra 1.6 16v Club , 5 Dr, Manual, Hatchback, Petrol, 2001 51 Reg , 86,000 miles, Silver	£1,995
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ROVER 45 1.6i Olympic S , 5 Doors, Manual, Hatchback, Petrol, 2000 W Reg , 57,000 miles, Red	£1,495
RENAULT Megane Scenic 1.9 RT dTi , 5 Dr, Manual, Hatchback, Diesel, 1998 R Reg , 114,000 miles, Blue	£1,495
ROVER 416 Si , 5 Dirs, Manual, Hatchback, Petrol, 1998 R Reg, 86,000 miles, Blue	£1,295
CITROEN Xsara 1.8i 16v SX , 5 Drs, Manual, Hatchback, Petrol, 1998 , Green, Part Service History	£1,195
PROTON Persona 1.5SE , 4 Doors, Manual, Saloon, Petrol, 1995 M Reg , 98,000 miles, Blue. Front electric windows, Electric door mirrors	£750

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C2, 1.4 HDi SX 3dr, ly06wrrm, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, immobiliser, park distance control, passenger airbag, radio/cd, power assisted steering, rear headrests, remote locking, side airbags, 806 miles was, blue, 40000 miles, £4995, Sittingbourne, 01795 429802 (TRADE)

FORD

FIESTA 1.4TDCI , full dealer facilities, hp-leasing, warranty, warranted mileage, 2 seater, white, 8 miles, £7995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FIESTA 1400 TDCI **NEW** , ly09smc, panel van, full dealer facilities, hp-leasing, warranty, blue, 40 miles, £7490, Crayford, 01322 621667 (TRADE)

FIESTA SPORT VAN , ly57aju, panel van, finance available, full dealer facilities, hp-leasing, tax, warranty, alloy wheels, 2 seater, red, 4200 miles, £7499, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FOCUS, 1.6 TITANIUM 5dr, ey08hnm, metallic avalon, abs, air conditioning, alloy wheels, electric windows, side airbags, radio/cd, blue, 9970 miles, £10995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FOCUS, 1.6 Sport 5dr Auto, mf06omk, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, driver airbag, roof rails, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, full leather trim, insurance group:6, blue, 1039 miles, £5490, Crayford, 01322 621667 (TRADE)

KA, 1.3i Zetec [70] 3dr [Climate], ly08ydl, adjustable seats, air conditioning, alloy wheels, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, radio/cd, rear headrests, full leather trim, insurance group:4, blue, 4701 miles, £6995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FUSION, 1.4 2 16v semi-auto, gl04whe, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, computer, driver airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, folding rear seats, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, radio/cd, rear headrests, full leather trim, insurance group:3, green, 51500 miles, £13895, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

KA, 1.3i Collection [70] 3dr, gk56ukt, central locking, computer, driver airbag, electric windows, head restraints, power assisted steering, radio/cd, rear headrests, insurance group:3, grey, 28230 miles, £5795, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

KA, 1.3i Collection [70] 3dr, ls06euu, driver airbag, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, power assisted steering, radio/cd, rear headrests, insurance group:2, red, 20618 miles, £6995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

FUSION, 1.6 Zetec 5dr Auto [Climate], ly08yds, metallic amethyst, abs, adjustable seats, air conditioning, alloy wheels, driver airbag, electric mirrors, immobiliser, passenger airbag, power assisted steering, remote locking, radio/cd, mauve, 17085 miles, £7995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

KA, 1.3i Collection [70] 3dr, gy55yla, central locking, computer, driver airbag, electric windows, head restraints, folding rear seats, immobiliser, power assisted steering, radio/cd, rear headrests, insurance group:3, blue, 21948 miles, £5495, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

GALAXY, 2.0 TDCI Zetec 5dr Auto DVD NAV, ek57dhf, metallic moonmist, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, immobiliser, park distance control, passenger airbag, radio/cd, rear headrests, remote locking, roof rails, side airbags, radio/cd, rear headrests, navigation, insurance group:11, black, 11509 miles, £16995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

GALAXY, 2.0 TDCI Ghia 5dr, lyj08pnu, contact the used car team for help, all vehicles come with balance of 3 year, park assist, parking sensors, privacy glass, rain sensing wipers, abs, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, 12,190 miles, £12,199, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

MONDEO, 1.8 TDCI Zetec 5dr [6], gl57wjs, abs, adjustable seats, adjustable steering column/wheel, air conditioning, alloy wheels, climate control, computer, cruise control, driver airbag, passenger airbag, electric mirrors, electric windows, foglights, front armrest, side airbags, spoiler, please contact les bellchambers, insurance group:7, blue, 21,197 miles, £12,995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

RANGER, Pick Up XLT Double Cab TD 4WD, gl57pwo, 4x4, double cab, full dealer facilities, hp-leasing, pcp, black, 150 miles, £1095, Sittingbourne, 01795 426693 (TRADE)

RANGER WILTRAK, 156 ps, max weight 2985 kg, max pulling weight 3000 kg, alloy wheels, cat 1 alarm, reverse parking sensors, finance available, full dealer facilities, hp-leasing, warranty, warranted mileage, 5 seat, blue, 8 miles, £13895, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

RANGER WILTRAK, 09reg, 156 ps, double cab, max weight 2985 kg, max pulling weight 3000 kg, alloy wheels, 9 miles, £13895, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

RANGER WILTRAK, 09reg, 156 ps, double cab, max weight 2985 kg, max pulling weight 3000 kg, alloy wheels, driver airbag, electric windows, head restraints, leather seats, immobiliser, power assisted steering, remote locking, rear headrests, full leather trim, insurance group:6, blue, 4701 miles, £6995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

RANGER WILTRAK, 09reg, 156 ps, double cab, max weight 2985 kg, max pulling weight 3000 kg, alloy wheels, driver airbag, electric windows, head restraints, leather seats, immobiliser, power assisted steering, remote locking, rear headrests, full leather trim, insurance group:6, blue, 4701 miles, £6995, Gravesend, 01474 537111 (TRADE)

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07 57 Renault Laguna 1.5 dCi Expression 5dr	Parker's Price £10,165 Save £1,166* Our Price from £8,999
05 55 Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 Life 5dr	Parker's Price £6,195 Save £196* Our Price from £5,999

07 57 Vauxhall Corsa 1.2i 16v SXi 3dr	Parker's Price £8,125 Our Price from £7,250 Including Air Con
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WOMEN seeking men

TAKE ME FOR WHO I AM

Hi I'm Sam, 22, looking for a relationship. I'm blonde, brown eyes, love cosy nights in and cinema, looking to share a relationship. Box 447871 **T**

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Fun-to-be-with, blonde female, 25, 5ft2, a woman who loves football! Enjoys going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man, to be her soulmate. Box 446494 **T**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...

Sociable girl, 28, loves pubs, social drinks, meeting new people & more, seeks similar male, 56-62, for a lasting relationship. Box 448756 **T**

BRING ME SUNSHINE

Outgoing, fun female, 23, seeking outgoing, fun guy to make me laugh, share good times. Box 882511 **T**

GIVE AND TAKE IN LOVE

Loving loyal female, 30, blue eyes, brown hair, seeking LTR with male 30-35, 5ft6, no baggage, in the Maidstone area. Box 448471 **T**

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HAPPY DAYS!

Attractive, fun-loving female, 31, 5ft4, size 12, dark hair with blonde highlights, tactile, WLTM intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 308734 **T**

READY FOR ME?

Single mum from Kent, 34, 5ft4, works part time, looking for an easy-going and genuine male with gosh for friendship, more. Box 450649 **T**

LIVING IT

Fair-haired female, 35, 5ft, loves the gym, pubs, nights out and fine company, searching for fun bloke, for life, love and laughter. Box 881011

SOULD GOOD?

Hello I'm 35, kind, caring and non-smoking, enjoy cooking, cinema, music, dining in and out, looking for that special someone to enjoy a relationship with. Box 447595 **T**

A NEW FUTURE!

I'm Rachel, 35, medium, enjoys pubs, clubs, cosy nights in, cinema, theme parks, looking someone special to share things with. Box 448591 **T**

ON A ROLL

Hi, I'm Alison, 36, 5ft5, single mum, loves swimming, roller skating and meeting new people, looking for a male for friendship, maybe leading to more. Box 448665 **T**

WISHFULLY YOURS

Loving female, 37, 5ft2, brown hair, slim build, looking for honest, caring male with GSOH, for friendship, leading to more. Ashford. Box 449915 **T**

ENTHUSIASM ENCOURAGED!

Lovely pretty big-busted lady, 39, medium build, 5ft5, lots of energy! Likes the gym, reading, new experiences! seeking a nice man for potential exciting relationship! Box 446724 **T**

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Seeking genuine, sincere, honest guy who likes to have fun. I'm a friendly, 40yr old female like cats, wind surfing, railway trips, cafes. Box 449747

THE SIMPLE THINGS...

I like reading/writing, going out, music. Seeking kind, genuine, honest chap; I'm a 40yr old woman who enjoys the simple things in life. Box 448519 **T**

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES!

Single mum, 43, kind and devoted, likes walks, cinema, beaches and socialising, drinks and films, seeks similar man for lasting love. Box 883110 **T**

COME ON DOWN!

Honest, bubbly female, 45, long hair, slim, enjoys walking, cinema, socialising; seeks honest, friendly chap for friendship leading to more. Box 882693 **T**

SOULD GOOD?

Hi I'm Lynne, 46, 5ft4, dark hair, love reading/writing, going out, astrology, cars; seeking honest, caring, outgoing guy to enjoy music, fun, friendship and more! Box 449186 **T**

LOOKING FOR LOVE

Sun-loving 48yr old woman with a second home in Lanzarote, 5ft6, fairly slim, hazel eyes, looking for a man to share fun times with. Box 450310 **T**

ARE YOU THE ONE FOR ME?

Caring, cute female, 46, petite, likes socialising, dancing, travelling, good food, seeking intelligent, loyal man 42-52 for love and TLC. Seaford. Box 901893 **T**

ANIMAL LOVER?

Nurse, 37yrs, 2 kids, 5ft8, blonde hair, blue eyes, likes the gym, cooking, swimming, salsa dancing, looking for a kind, caring, loyal male Box 445157 **T**

A NICE BOTTLE OF WINE

Lovely, glossy blonde, 39yrs old, petite, bubbly and loving, enjoys theatre, music and eating out, with a professional, loving and tactile male for a relationship. Box 442551 **T**

SOUND GOOD?

Medium build blonde, 40, 5ft7, single mum, enjoys bowling and water-sports, looking for a tall, non-smoking, white male for a stable and affectionate relationship. Box 450656 **T**

JUST IMAGINE

Petite, bubbly, friendly, easy-going single mum, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, most things. WLTM genuine male, to see where life takes us! Box 893562 **T**

LAST CHANCE

Good-looking female, 50, looking for a kind, reliable and honest man, must be a moderate drinker, for companionship and romance. Box 450655 **T**

NO TIES

Lonely, bored, professional Tunbridge Wells Asian lady, 40, WLTM white male, single, solvent, professional white male 40-50 for company, fun, love and laughter. Box 443573 **T**

LOOKING FOR A LOVING CHAP

Ashford-based woman looking for an honest, friendly and caring and loving man. I have two kids and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446985 **T**

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOVE

37y old female, 2 kids, slim, brown hair and eyes, 5ft2, looking for a caring, loving, honest and trusting male to be my one special someone. Box 446552 **T**

COSY TIMES TOGETHER

Fun-loving female, 42, looking for someone who can make me laugh and enjoys country walks, films, travelling and a nice evening cuddled up. Box 881545 **T**

HISTORIC MEETING?

Mum of three, 36, long mousey hair, blue eyes, interested in historical places, music, eating out, sees kind, caring, genuine male 36-49, non-smoker, for LTR. Box 440693 **T**

LOVE TO LOVE YOU

Lovely female, 36, 5ft4, medium-large-build, blonde hair, blue eyes, own house, loves walking, going out, the usual! Seeking male for long-term/serious relationship. Box 438102 **T**

MEND A BROKEN HEART

Single mum, 37, fun-loving, been hurt in past, looking for nice, genuine guy for hopeful happiness - no time wasters! Box 449053 **T**

SEIZE THE DAY

Loving female, 36, 5ft4, brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, sees genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428666 **T**

CUTE AS CAN BE

Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old, Kent-based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 867963 **T**

HORSES FOR COURSES...

Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5ft2, blonde, likes walking, horse-riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384012 **T**

AND THE SPARKS WILL FLY

Bubbly lively lady, 5ft7, outgoing, 33, honest, reliable, looking for someone to get to know and see what happens. Sittingbourne. Box 449585 **T**

CARING, CONSIDERATE, HOPEFULLY YOURS

Lovely young lady, 33, 5ft8, cuddly larger build, single mum, seeking kind, caring, honest and genuine man for fun/friendship...hopefully more. Box 450371 **T**

FIT FOR FUN

Petite, dark-haired girl, 33, 5ft, loves badminton, cinema and more, searching for an active man, with heart and soul. Box 881047 **T**

CARING, CONSIDERATE, HOPEFULLY YOURS

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Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5ft2, blonde, likes walking, horse-riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384012 **T**

AND THE SPARKS WILL FLY

Bubbly lively lady, 5ft7, outgoing, 33, honest, reliable, looking for someone to get to know and see what happens. Sittingbourne. Box 449585 **T**

CUTE AS CAN BE

Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old, Kent-based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 867963 **T**

HORSES FOR COURSES...

Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5ft2, blonde, likes walking, horse-riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384012 **T**

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HORSES FOR COURSES...



TO ADVERTISE: **EMAIL US** @: appointments@kosmedia.co.uk

TELEPHONE US ON: 01303 817040 **FAX US ON:** 01303 817004

- ACCOUNTANCY
- ADMINISTRATION, SECRETARIAL, PA
- AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, ENVIRONMENT
- ART AND DESIGN
- CATERING, HOSPITALITY
- CONSTRUCTION, ARCHITECTURE, SURVEYORS
- CUSTOMER SERVICE, CALL CENTRE
- DOMESTIC
- EDUCATION, TEACHER, SCHOOL
- ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURING, UTILITIES
- ESTATE AGENCY, PROPERTY

- GRADUATE, TRAINEES
- HEALTH AND SAFETY, SECURITY, DEFENCE
- HR, RECRUITMENT
- INDUSTRIAL, WAREHOUSE, FACTORY
- IT, INTERNET, TELECOMS
- INSURANCE, BANKING, FINANCE
- LEGAL
- LEISURE, TOURISM, TRAVEL
- MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY
- MANAGEMENT, SENIOR POSITIONS
- MARKETING, ADVERTISING

- MOTOR TRADE, DRIVER
- NOT FOR PROFIT, CHARITIES
- NURSING, MEDICINE, CARE WORK
- OTHER
- PRINT, PACKAGING, DISTRIBUTION
- PR, MEDIA, JOURNALISM
- PUBLIC SECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES
- RETAIL, WHOLESALE, SALES
- SCIENTIFIC AND PHARMACEUTICAL, RESEARCH
- TRANSPORT, LOGISTICS, AVIATION

Senior & General Appointments 71-75

Public Notice 74



HEADTEACHER: PEGGY MURPHY, MA
BOUGHTON LANE, MAIDSTONE
KENT ME15 9QL
TEL: 01622 743925
FAX: 01622 744828
EMAIL: office@five-acre.kent.sch.uk
WEBSITE: www.five-acre.kent.sch.uk

Five Acre Wood School is looking for a RECEPTIONIST/CLERICAL ASSISTANT

to join our lively admin team

The hours will be 32.5 hours per week term time only. You will be paid on the Kent Scale Band 3 salary range points 7-11 £10450-£11847 actual.

This job will be subject to satisfactory references and an enhanced CRB. Please contact the school for an application pack. Closing date will be Thursday 9th April. Interviews will be held on Monday 27th April.

Five Acre Wood and all its personnel are committed to safeguarding children and young people.

SUPPORT WORKER

required for four hours on a Thursday evening to support a young lady with learning disabilities in her own home in Teynham. Other positions may be available.

Apply to Jenny
01634 715995
c.r.service@
btconnect.com

THE POTENTIAL TO EARN LIKE A CEO WITH MORE FREEDOM

You Deserve It!
Personal Development Industry.
Outstanding Training
www.incomesunlimited.com/globalsuccess
Call Now 0786-123-8109

Keele House, Ramsgate require an
EXPERIENCED CARER

with at least NVQ2
Full time
Shift work - alternative weekends
Please contact Margaret on 01843 591735

Catalogue Distributors Required
£50-£300 per week
Flexi hours,
Part or full time, 18+

Tel: 0845 8736035
www.aim2aspire.co.uk

We are looking for:
**Waiting / Bar Staff
Kitchen Porters & Commis Chef**
t: 01622 749082
e: info@themulberrytreekent.co.uk



MidKent College

MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone is seeking to appoint outstanding individuals in the following area:

Personal Tutor Ref: P0316 (Full-time, Part-time and Fixed Term)

Salary: £20,368 - £26,255 per annum/pro rata

We currently have a number of opportunities for full-time and part-time Personal Tutors. As a Personal Tutor you will plan and deliver a full range of group tutorials to learners with a wide range of abilities. You will be able to work with minimum supervision and have experience of working in a coaching, mentoring or teaching capacity and be willing to undertake an appropriate teaching qualification. When applying, please state clearly your preferred role.

Closing date: Friday 17 April 2009

Mid-Kent College is working in partnership with RBLI Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBLI, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBLI on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website www.rbli.co.uk for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

Application forms and further details are available from www.midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the Personnel department on 01634 884402 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

Mid-Kent College is an equal opportunities employer

New Career for 2009



The Royal School of Military Engineering, Brompton Barracks, Chatham

Faculty Manager c£40k plus performance related pay

Candidates should have management experience and be well organised and disciplined. Reporting to the Head of Division you will be responsible for the efficient "day to day" operation of the faculty with a number of Programme Area Leaders, covering a wide range of engineering trade disciplines, reporting to you.

Leadership, Influence and Decision Making are critical skills that a candidate will be able to evidence.

Programme Area Leader £30,312 - £35,000

Candidates should possess relevant trade qualifications and experience in Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (ACR) or Heating and Plumbing (H&P) and be able to demonstrate supervisory skills and experience, ideally within these trade areas. Candidates will be required to undertake teaching duties in these trade disciplines, if required to maintain course continuity.

Evidence of formal teaching experience or qualifications is not critical as candidates will be provided with appropriate training and supported to achieve appropriate teaching qualifications. You will supervise a number of trade Instructors.

MKC Training Services Limited is responsible for delivering the trade, technical and professional training to the Royal Engineers at Chatham and has recently been awarded a 30 year contract. These positions are therefore permanent full time posts with the opportunity for the right candidates to join an exciting organisation making a real difference to the British Army.

If this looks like the right career move for you, contact Ken Pullan on 07725 128661 for an informal discussion or forward a copy of your CV to ken.pullan@midkent.ac.uk

Job descriptions for these posts are available at www.midkent.ac.uk (follow RSME vacancies)

Closing date: 19th April 2009

The College is committed to Equal Opportunities and to selection on merit. It welcomes applications from all sections of society. We particularly welcome and encourage applications from under represented groups including black, minority ethnic and disabled people.

MidKent College is an equal opportunity employer





Career Opportunities

Sheppeney College is an equal opportunities employer

Sheppeney College is a satellite of Canterbury College and has been open since 1996. We offer a variety of courses in a modern and friendly learning environment and enjoy excellent rates of success.

Supply Lecturer Administration

Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum

The closing date for the above posts is Monday 20th April 2009 at 12 noon.

For an information pack please visit www.canterburycollege.ac.uk or call the Human Resources Office on 01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone) quoting the above reference.

Staff benefits include:

- Pension & Life Assurance Scheme
- Proximity to main bus & train stations
- Generous Holiday Allowance
- Close to Town Centre

 CLICK
www.canterburycollege.ac.uk/job-vacancies



Ref: S/SH/Admin



Opportunities at



Canterbury City Council is a big business with a turnover of more than £100 million and over 900 employees. Rated an Excellent Council and a Times Best Council to Work For, Canterbury is a great place to work. Our conditions include final salary pension scheme plus benefits, flexible working hours and relocation package (where applicable).

Economic Development Officer

Chief Executive's Department ■ Salary range £20,517 to £25,719 pa ■ Permanent position ■ 37 hours per week

We are looking for an individual to manage projects that promote and support local economic development.

You will demonstrate an understanding of economic development issues and have excellent communication skills to develop relationships within the organisation and with partners including the business community.

Please quote job reference: 1814

Transmanche Enterprise Network Project Officer

Chief Executive's Department ■ Salary range £25,729 to £28,191 pa pro rata 22.5 hours per week ■ Three year fixed term contract

Are you self-motivated, excellent at project management and partnership development and experienced in European funding?

This exciting role involves supporting and encouraging entrepreneurship, the development of micro businesses and encouraging cross border trading. French or Flemish language skills would be an advantage and the ability to travel and work flexible hours are required.

Please quote job reference: 1815

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms: 12 noon 17 April 2009

Interviews and assessment process will take place on:

Job reference 1814: 29 April 2009 Job reference 1815: 30 April 2009

We prefer applications on-line. For further details of these positions and all our latest opportunities and to apply on-line, visit our website at www.canterbury.gov.uk/jobs or e-mail jobs@canterbury.gov.uk If you are unable to access the internet, telephone 01227 862 072 (24 hour answerphone).

We can supply application packs in Braille or large print format if required

We are an equal opportunities employer.

Putting people first

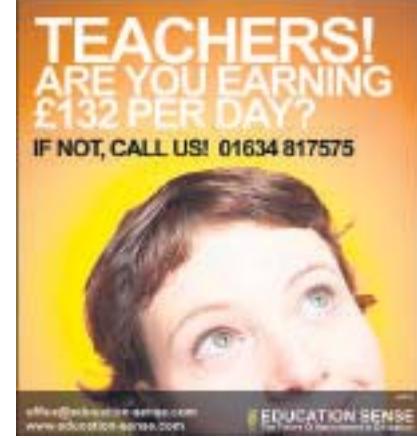


Class 2 drivers for food delivery, 20 - 30 drops. Fridge & Multidrop experience preferred. Based out of Aylesford.

Class 1 & 2 drivers for drinks delivery. Previous dray experience preferred. Based in Crayford & Faversham

PCV drivers for general coach work. Private hire, Rail replacement, School runs. Based in Gravesend, Medway, Maidstone & Aylesford. £9.00/hr, guaranteed 8hrs pay.

For information on these and other vacancies please call **Andy** or **Alex** on 01622 664999



Career Opportunities



Canterbury College is an equal opportunities employer

Canterbury College is a Further and Higher Education College in the heart of Kent. Our goal is to be one of the best FE Colleges in England by 2010. We have 9,000 students across 300 courses and enjoy an enviable reputation as a great place to learn. Our brand new £50M Campus is also home to nearly 800 staff and we have some great career opportunities which may be right for you.

Head of Faculty Arts, Media and Publishing

09/11

37 hrs per week, salary starting at £42,128 per annum

Manager Health & Social Care

06/110

37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum

Temporary Manager Equine, Animal Care, Veterinary Services and Environmental Conservation

09/04

37 hrs per week, salary starting at £33,858 per annum. Temporary post to cover maternity leave not to exceed 12 months.

Supply Registered Dental Nurse or Registered Hygienist required to lecturer on a range of courses

S/RDN

Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum

Supply Lecturer required in the following areas:

S/FL

S/SEC

Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum

Examinations Coordinator

ECO

37 hrs per week, salary starting from £18,963 per annum

Supply NVQ Assessors required in the following areas:

S/NVQ/EY

Early Years

S/NVQ/PW

Playwork

S/NVQ/CS

Cleaning Support (Cleaning and Domestic)

S/NVQ/SEC

Security

Various hours available, salary range from £18,295 - £26,232 pro rata per annum

Supply Lecturers within the Faculty of Engineering and Construction

S/EC

Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum

We run a wide range of courses from basic to advanced level and we are looking for professionals from the various trades to join our team of part-time staff. You will need to have suitable qualifications – such as C&G, BTEC, IMI, CITB or similar and current experience in one of the areas. We offer a teacher training programme to suitable applicants who wish to join us in providing this important service to the local community.

- Mechanical Engineering
- Bench fitting
- Turning and milling
- CAD
- Welding
- Motor vehicle mechanics
- Vehicle parts
- Vehicle electrics
- Brickwork
- Carpentry
- Electrical installation
- Vehicle painting
- Vehicle body work
- Plumbing
- Gas fitting
- Key Skills
- Mathematics
- ICT
- Any other related trade

The closing date for the above posts is Monday 20th April 2009 at 12 noon

For an information pack please visit www.canterburycollege.ac.uk or call the Human Resources Office on 01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone) quoting the above reference.

Staff benefits include:

- Pension & Life Assurance Scheme
- Proximity to main bus & train stations
- Close to City Centre
- Sports Hall & Gym
- Generous Holiday Allowance
- Staff Discount Scheme



Tenterden & District Age Concern Day Care Centre

Age Concern Day Centre Manager – We are looking to recruit an enthusiastic and experienced person to manage the day to day running and organisation of the Day Centre, which provides a variety of day care services for older people.

NVQ 3 in Care or equivalent qualification essential.
Previous experience of working with older people preferred.
Working hours – 35 hours per week
Annual leave 20 days plus statutory Bank Holidays.
Starting salary not less than £18,000.00 pa, depending on experience and qualifications.

Secretary/administrative support – We also require a flexible and adaptable person to work on a part-time basis offering secretarial and administrative support to the Age Concern Day Centre Manager and staff.

An ability to work with older people an advantage.
Working hours – 9.00 to 12.30pm Monday to Friday
Salary £8.00 per hour
Annual leave 20 days plus statutory Bank Holidays.

For details contact Nicky Tredway 01580 762882.
Tenterden & District Day Centre, Church Road, Tenterden, TN30 6AT
Closing date April 17th 2009
All appointments subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks.

To advertise in this section



01303
817040

PART-TIME FIELD SALES EXECUTIVE DON'T EVEN CALL UNLESS YOU ARE AN OVER ACHIEVER & CAN PROVE IT!

We are a high quality, established company who have been trading in the construction industry for over 30 years.

Come and build an empire within our fine company.

WE ONLY EMPLOY TOP PRODUCERS.

If you were an **average** executive in 2009, you have earned so far this year your basic pay plus over **£3,000 in commission**.

If you were a **star** you would have earned the same basic plus over **£6,000 in commission**.

YOUNG OR OLD, IF YOU HAVE GOT WHAT IT TAKES, WE WILL KNOW!

Contact us on: 01634 263121

Recycling Advisors/ Supervisors

required to join our exciting Public Engagement Team, working across Kent on behalf of the Kent Waste Partnership to promote recycling to residents. Advisors: £7.00 p/h + expenses. Supervisors: £8.25 p/h + expenses. All positions full time (max 40 hours per week) for 11 weeks. Must be able to work evenings and weekends. Start date 08/05/09.

For an application form contact **Azim Khan** at **M-E-L Research** on **0121 604 4664** or email **azim.khan@m-e-l.co.uk**

ACCOUNTS CLERK Six Month Contract

Salary dependant on experience.

Clive Emson Auctioneers has a vacancy for a Full-time Accounts Clerk to join our Maidstone Office.

Duties: All aspects of the running of our busy Accounts Department including data inputting, daily management of invoices, payroll, clients account, monthly bank reconciliations and all other duties up to trial balance level.

Sage Line 50 experience essential. AAT qualification or equivalent desirable.

Apply in writing, with CV, to: Miss Andrea Bennett, Clive Emson Auctioneers, Rocky Hill, London Road, Maidstone, ME16 8PY or email: andrea@cliveemson.co.uk

Closing Date: Friday, 24 April 2009

Clive Emson
LAND AND PROPERTY AUCTIONEERS

KOS Media, publisher of the award-winning Kent on Sunday, the Saturday Observer, and the YourLocal midweek titles and associated websites, has vacancies for

Distribution & Promotional staff

Part-time Weekends.

We require a number of staff across the county to assist in the distribution and promotion of our award winning titles.

The job will involve delivery to specific addresses, both business and residential, as well as assisting with various promotions in stores or at specific venues.

Good rates of pay, plus expenses.

• Please telephone Barbara or Lyndsay on 01303 817070.



Award winning publications
www.kentnews.co.uk

JOURNALISTS REQUIRED (Freelance/Contract)

KOS Media launched its Midweek series of local newspapers 18 months ago and there are now 10 titles covering towns and districts across East and Mid Kent.

Our industry is going through change but KOS Media's successful mix of newspapers, websites and online TV offers news journalists a unique challenge.

If you think you would like to be part of a growing media company and you are experienced, able to write great copy, confident enough to take responsibility and also come up with great ideas, I'd like to hear from you.

I have freelance and contract positions which I know will suit a lot of good journalists in this county.

Contact: **Gary Wright,**
Midweek Group Editor
on 01303 817032
or email gary.wright@kosmedia.co.uk

KOS Media is a highly successful newspaper publisher within Kent, that has received many awards from the newspaper industry for the innovative Kent on Sunday, Kent on Saturday and numerous mid-week newspapers.

We now have vacancies for experienced

Mac Operators

We are looking for experienced, confident, self-motivated team players who wish to gain experience within the industry to further their career.

The individual must have relevant Mac experience including knowledge of Quark, Photoshop and Illustrator. The ability to touch-type would be advantageous.

The candidate should be able to work under pressure, meet strict deadlines and be eager to work within a team environment to ensure the smooth operation of our fast-paced production department. Hours will be variable.

To apply, send a CV and covering letter to: **Personnel**

KOS Media

Apple Barn

Hythe Road

Smeeth

Kent TN25 6SR

or email: personnel@kosmedia.co.uk



TEACHER OF FOOD TECHNOLOGY / TEXTILES - MPS

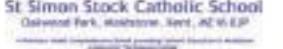
As a Specialist Technology College we are seeking to appoint a well-qualified, enthusiastic and energetic teacher to join this successful and developing department that is expanding into KS5 with Food Technology and Textiles. Ability to teach other design and technology subjects would be an advantage.

For further information please contact the Headteacher's P.A. Mrs. Theisen on telephone number 01622 689422 or email headteacher@st-simon-stock.kent.sch.uk

You can also visit our website to download an application form and job description at www.st-simon-stock.kent.sch.uk

Closing date, Tuesday 21st April 2009 at 4pm – interviews will take place shortly afterwards.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults



SCIENCE LABORATORY TECHNICIAN DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY TECHNICIAN

Science Laboratory Technician, 35 hours per week for

38 weeks a year (term time only).

Design & Technology Technician, part-time for 38 weeks a year (term time only).

Both salaries dependent on experience - Band 3 Kent Scheme Salaries

For further information please contact the Headteacher's P.A. Mrs. Theisen on telephone number 01622 689422 or email headteacher@st-simon-stock.kent.sch.uk

You can also visit our website to download an application form and job description at www.st-simon-stock.kent.sch.uk

Closing date, Friday 24th April 2009 at 2pm - interviews will take place shortly afterwards.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

KOS MEDIA (PUBLISHING) LTD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Advertisements will be accepted only on the express condition that the advertiser warrants that the advertisement does not in any way contravene any existing legislation and in particular the Trade and Description Act 1968 and the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

2. It is the responsibility of all advertisers to ensure that all advertising meets all forms of government legislation and KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd (the "media owner") takes no responsibility in liability in connection with the content of our media.

3. All rates quoted are subject to VAT at the rate currently in force at the time the advertisement appears.

4. All rates within the annual advertising agreement will be rate protected for 12 months from the first date of publication under the signed agreement.

5. Any unsuitable material posted on any website belonging to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd by the advertiser or any associated third party will be removed or refused. All personal and secret support to the advertiser by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd in relation to the website or any other publication will be discontinued via the media owner's online administration tool will be the responsibility of the advertiser. The advertiser indemnifies KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd against any damages as a result of misuse of these privileges by either the advertiser or any third party given password privileges by the advertiser.

6. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd reserves the right to change passwords intermittently to ensure the overall and ongoing security of its websites within the public domain.

7. Copyright and other intellectual property rights in the material or for the use of the material or otherwise in the various forms of media in print, online and moving picture or otherwise within the various forms of media or music, video or other music. The advertiser must be able to verify any statements or claims (provisional or otherwise) in relation to their products/services promoted within any of the media offerings belonging to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd.

8. Where shrinkage of an advertisement occurs for whatever reason, the advertiser will be required to pay up to the nearest full centimetre where it relates to the media owner's printed publications. This will not apply to full-page advertisements, which remain full pages even after shrinkage.

9. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd reserves the right to omit or refuse any advertisement/commercial/web content without notice or explanation. In these terms the word "advertiser" shall be construed to include any person or organisation whose advertising is inserted on behalf of the media owner.

10. A guarantee of insertion cannot be given as the media owners shall not be liable for any loss or damage caused by any error inaccuracy within your marketing content. In no case shall the total liability of the media owner for any error or omission exceed the price charged by the media owners for that advertising.

11. No liability is accepted for any loss or damage alleged to have arisen through delay in advertising to boxes numbers, however caused, nor for the loss or damage to any artwork supplied.

12. Our terms and conditions in your media messages with KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must be made in writing to the accounts department within 10 days of Publishing.

13. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions made on their websites by the advertiser.

14. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd has the right to cancel the advertiser's annual membership without notice should the advertiser deliberately publish out of date material or content on any of the media owner's online digital platforms. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd will seek to recover, in full, all outstanding invoices in relation to the signed annual membership to reflect the advertiser's negligence in this regard and reserves the right to charge damages for any loss or damage caused by the advertiser.

15. Advertisers are requested to check their advertisements after the first insertion. The media owner will not be responsible for any errors on subsequent insertions, which have not been advised to them in writing.

16. A minimum of one month's notice must be given in writing for any cancellation of the signed annual advertiser's agreement. Upon cancellation, all invoices from KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd for the standard effective period of advertising from 20th June 2009 will be received and paid accordingly in line with KOS Media's standard media rates (as per the contract effective July 2008-June 2009) and will reflect the revised length of commitment denoted by the advertiser's written cancellation. Any surcharges, refunds or costs in relation to the production of the advertiser's TV commercial for the commitment set out within the advertiser's agreement will be met in full by the advertiser as per KOS Media's standard media advertising rate card (July 2008-June 2009). Discounts will be repudiated and any refunds or surcharges will be paid by either party within 30 days of the cancellation. Any cancellation or cancellation of other advertising placed must give a minimum of seven days' notice and any discounts given for series bookings will be forfeited by the advertiser upon cancellation.

17. Seasonal contracts. Your Professional classified advertisements or any uplift advertising within the annual contract with the advertiser will be booked in full - at rate card - on receipt of any written cancellation of this contract within the 12-months.

18. All uplift advertisements must be booked in at least three months in advance of publication and will be subject to availability. All dates booked will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

19. The advertiser must agree to the date and time of filming of any online TV advertising commercial supplied by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd within the advertiser's agreement. (Platinum, Gold, Silver standard of commercial). Should, for any reason, the advertiser not be available at the agreed time without giving sufficient notice (at least 48 hours), KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd reserves the right to charge for any further TV production at its standard published hourly rate should the advertiser wish to use KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd's production services company. The commercial will be repudiated by the media owner until the advertiser has given permission for the production to be made. The advertiser will be required to pay the PRS rights as per the PRS's terms and conditions. The advertiser will be responsible to pay the PRS rights should the production be made by a third party. The media owner will accept the PRS's terms and conditions and will not be liable for any costs or expenses incurred by the media owner in connection with the production. The advertiser will be responsible for any changes to the production and will be required to pay the PRS's fees for any changes made by the media owner. The media owner will accept the PRS's terms and conditions and will not be liable for any costs or expenses incurred by the media owner in connection with the production. The advertiser will be responsible for any changes to the production and will be required to pay the PRS's fees for any changes made by the media owner. The media owner will accept the PRS's terms and conditions and will not be liable for any costs or expenses incurred by the media owner in connection with the production. The advertiser will be responsible for any changes to the production and will be required to pay the PRS's fees for any changes made by the media owner. 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KOS Media, publisher of the award-winning Kent on Sunday, the Saturday Observer, and our midweek titles and associated websites, has a vacancy for a

Freelance sub-editor

We are currently looking for a freelance sub-editor for three days work a week. Candidates must have excellent QuarkXpress skills and be competent at using Adobe Photoshop. You will be able to spot a typo at 100 paces and be able to write attention-grabbing headlines.

• To apply, send a CV and covering letter to: Dave Hobday, Head of Subbing or email dave.hobday@kosmedia.co.uk.



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KOS Media
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CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE ACROSS EAST KENT



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Health Visitor X 2 (*) (car)

Ref: 767-ECL1021

Band 6: £24,831 - £33,436 per annum (pro rata for part time)

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Full Time: 37.5 Hours per week

(30 Hours would be considered)

We are looking for two dynamic, innovative, self-motivated, qualified Health Visitors to work in Herne Bay and Whitstable. You will be joining teams supported by skill mix and working towards integration with school nursing to provide a seamless service to children and families in our locality. We work within the Eastern and Coastal Kent Framework for Health Visiting, providing a progressive universal service.

If you are pro-active and keen to develop the Public Health Agenda and are also interested in developing services which respond to the needs of the community, then we would love to hear from you.

Excellent communication skills, a flexible, forward thinking approach and commitment to team working are crucial.

It is recommended that you phone the teams for an informal discussion and they will be very happy to facilitate an informal visit. Please contact the Whitstable Team on 01227 378558, the Herne Bay team on 01227 594773 or Susan Gough, Locality Clinical Co-ordinator on 01843 855487.

Some re-location expenses may be agreed as per our Relocation Policy.

A comprehensive corporate induction programme is provided at the commencement of employment.

Please ensure that you check your NHS Jobs account regularly in order to see if you have been successful in obtaining an interview.

(*) Employment in this post is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau

(car) Car owner/driver essential, subject to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

For further information and to apply, please visit

www.easternandcoastalkent.nhs.uk

Completed applications by: 17 April 2009.

Interviews to be held on: 6 May 2009 (Provisionally)

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Duties will include providing the sales team with administration support as well as liaising directly with customers and other internal departments to ensure projects run smoothly and delivery dates are met. Effective communication is key as well as good organisation skills.

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Duties will include making of Doctor Blades for printing presses, operation of automated cleaning of Ink buckets, maintaining equipment and housekeeping. Full training will be provided.

You'll enjoy a full range of employee benefits.

To apply please send your CV to HR Department, Fuji Seal Europe Ltd, Scimitar Close, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0RJ or alternatively you can email to jobs@uk.fujiseal.com.

Closing date: 6 April 2009

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SCHOOL RECEPTION SECRETARY

A Temporary, part time, position has arisen, due to retirement, in Riverview Junior School's front office. The contract will be for 3 months.

We are looking for someone with good people skills, professional telephone manner and who enjoys working with children. The successful candidate must be computer literate.

Closing date for applications is 9th April 2009.

Please contact the Headteacher Mrs R Dymond or the School Business Manager Mrs S Donovan at Riverview Junior School

Cimba Wood, Gravesend, Kent DA12 4SD

Email: headteacher@riverview-junior.kent.sch.uk

PARTS ASSISTANT

Baileys Nissan require a Parts Assistant for busy parts department. Parts experience is essential. Nissan knowledge an advantage. Clean driving license required.

Apply with CV to

Mr G Tong
Baileys Nissan
Westminster Road
Vauxhall Ind. Estate
Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YY
01227 766777

email: guy.tong@baileysnissan.co.uk



Intervenor for Children and Young People with Multisensory Impairment/Deafblind

Starting salary £23,053, with progression through contribution related pay to £26,421 pro rata

3 x 25 hours per week

Fixed Term posts until 31st March 2011

Countywide

Work bases for each post are:

West Kent: Kings Hill, West Malling
Mid Kent: Kroner House, Ashford
East Kent: Clover House, Whitstable

This is an exciting initiative under Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families.

This is an opportunity for practitioners experienced in working with children and young people with sensory impairment to work as intervenors with deafblind children from birth to 19 years of age.

Also working with families to develop and support individual communication modes, you will support children and young people with Multisensory Impairment (MSI)/deafblind to participate in extended services and community activities and so to enable families to experience "short breaks".

Working within the Specialist Teaching Service and in liaison with Disabled Children's Service, you will enskill service providers to communicate effectively with children and young people with MSI/deafblind and to support smooth transitions.

You should hold a suitable qualification within this field at NVQ level 3 or equivalent coupled with an additional qualification in MSI/deafblind, sign language, Braille, mobility or guide-communicator.

The 25 hours per week will be delivered flexibly to meet the needs of children, young people and their families as the post is likely to require some work in the evenings and/or weekends.

The ability to travel across a wide geographical area in a timely and flexible manner at various times of the day to meet the requirements of the service is essential.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Application to the Criminal Records Bureau.

To apply, visit www.kent.gov.uk/jobs Alternatively, please email recruitment.line@kent.gov.uk or call 0845 8247 904. Please quote reference: CFE/09/0113.

Closing date: Midday, 21st April 2009.



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Quantity Surveyor

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PUBLIC NOTICE

GLOW SALONS LIMITED

Company Number 6296268

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a Meeting of the Creditors of the above named Company will be held at The Meeting Room, Virgin 1st Class Passenger Lounge, Euston Station, London on 23 April 2009 at 11.45am for the purpose provided in Section 98 et seq. of the Insolvency Act 1986.

Donna Louise Cartmel, Licensed Insolvency Practitioner, of Unique Business Finance Limited, Mansell House, Aspinall Close, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 6QQ will, during the period before the day of the meeting, furnish creditors free of charge with such information concerning the Company's affairs as they may reasonably require.

Dated 18 March 2009

By Order of the Board

John Anthony Walters, Director

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services and receive Jobs by Email,
get professional advice, build your
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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Reminding the over 40s of their skills

A NEW programme to help the over-40s facing the dole or already unemployed is being piloted in the county.

Called Shape Your Future, it's a free workshop taking place over two and a half days to allow people to explore self-employment as an option for the future.

Business Link's Sharon Massingham, who designed the programme, said: "Facing redundancy is frightening, particularly in the current climate, especially for those who are more mature and fear they might not find work again."

"It is important to recognise that it was the job that was lost, not you. You have the same skills, knowledge and experience you had before you were made redundant."

"It may be you are passionate about a hobby or interest that could be a potential business opportunity. Why not come along and find out if it is a possibility?"

Dates are April 27 and April 29 at Lordwood; and tomorrow (Thursday), May 19 and May 21 at Chatham.

Further workshops, including one aimed specifically at executives and professionals, will take place in Medway during May and June.

The programme is funded by the South East England Development Agency. Details on 01732 878586.

Forum says demand more from suppliers

ANYONE running a business knows that one or two suppliers and the odd client can be pains in the nether regions, but the Forum of Private Business says dealing with them has become one of the biggest headaches.

The forum, which represents many businesses in Kent, is urging small firms to save money by creating more efficient dealings with suppliers.

A survey by research and consulting agency YouGov found that 42 per cent of the owners of small businesses who responded were most anxious about dealing with difficult suppliers and clients. The same proportion said that their greatest concern was the fear of technology not working properly.

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Julie Maddocks asks: "Is small really beautiful in business?" Search 'crunch'

Trish's top tips could make the difference

■ BY **TONY PATEY**

TRAINING and development have shot to the forefront of business agendas as bosses realise that looking after their staff can help fight tough trading conditions.

With redundancies taking their toll, employers want to boost the morale and motivation of those still in work and training for the future is a key way of doing that.

Trish Fraser, managing director of Quality South East, the Investors in People centre for Kent, said: "Although it is generally accepted that staff development pays for itself in the long run, most companies are thinking about the short term at the moment."

"Making the case for investing in staff development has become more difficult in the past year as many organisations are focusing on efficiency and cost-cutting."

"However, those companies that look after their staff are much more likely to survive the recession."

Her top tips to help companies think about how they can develop their staff cost-effectively are:

- Prioritise training needs. Instead of cutting the budget on all training, think about what is essential for the organisation's development and which is desirable.
- Training does not have to be conducted by a specialist provider. People within an organisation that have received training are often very well equipped to deliver it and share best practice, which is also an empowering experience for employees.
- Development does not just mean training. Think about employees' roles and how their skills can be broadened through learning on the job.
- Allow employees flexible hours to pursue their own interests or to volunteer. Both can



PEOPLE MATTER: Trish Fraser, of Quality South East, says training and development of staff remains crucial

lead to ongoing development, as well as helping staff to feel appreciated, without a cost to the employer.

- Following major reorganisations, many people are being asked to cover new and expanded roles, but it is important that employees do not feel new responsibilities are being forced on them. Helping staff to feel motivated to test themselves will maintain productivity.
- Managers must help employees get to grips with new situations and challenges they are facing. Low morale and a lack of skills will ultimately impact the bottom line in so many

ways both the long and short term.

- Look at subsidised courses. Government grants are available and it is worth investigating the help that is out there.
- Online courses, whether bought in or developed in-house, can be very cost-effective. Employees can work at a time to suit them and do not have to spend days out of the office.
- Good communication is essential; encourage staff to talk to each other and share ideas. It may be that an employee has discovered an ingenious way of overcoming a problem that his or her colleagues are struggling with.

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RALLYCROSS**Freak incident puts dent in Davis's hopes****WRECKED:** Stefan Davis suffered heartache again

A BIZARRE accident before the start cost Stefan Davis dearly in the second round of the Ford Fiesta Trophy.

After almost winning on his series debut in the Malcolm Wilson rally last month, the Maidstone driver was hoping to capitalise with a strong points finish.

However, Davis's chances of glory were dashed before the opening stage of the rally, as his car rolled at just seven mph before loading it on to a trailer.

The roll significantly damaged the car's engine and Davis lost power, struggling to keep pace with the front-runners. He battled on to finish the event in 12th place.

Davis felt the freak accident before the first stage cost him any chance of a podium place.

He said: "It was the strangest thing that has happened before a rally, the car was basically destroyed on the driveway before it had left."

"Fair play to the boys, they worked flat out through the night to get the car drivable and had an emergency 24-hour glass repair chap replace every window."

Davis will be back in action in two weeks' time at the Pirelli International Rally in Carlisle.

VIEW THIS CLIP ONyourkenttv.co.uk **Your LOCAL TV** ONLINE

Mark Stimson discusses what he feels has been turning point of the season

**GREAT GUNS:** James Pinnock (left) and Meshach Nugent (right) formed a formidable attacking unit during the clash with Wealdstone, with Nugent netting twice to give the Stones victory

Stones look worryingly on course for a play-off place

AT this rate Maidstone could end up getting promoted by accident again.

There are precedents. In both 1989 and 2007, the Stones performed above expectations to win their respective divisions, but on both occasions the resulting demands of a higher level of football put the club under a barely tolerable financial strain.

As the present administration try to cope with the economic woes that saw the club briefly put up for sale before Christmas, the prospects of having to fund a side in the Conference South next season increased with this victory over play-off rivals Wealdstone.

The game was just 31 seconds old when Nathan Paul volleyed a half-chance wide and within three minutes Mesach Nugent had squandered a more clear-cut one-on-one, shooting straight at Luke Woods.

That was Nugent's 'sighter' as he was given two further chances and took both clinically.

On 11 minutes, he mugged the dithering Carl Martin and swept the opener past Woods, though the lead lasted just three minutes.

Wealdstone won a corner and David Hicks' cross was met with an unstoppable header

FOOTBALL

■ BY FRED ATKINS

Maidstone United 2

Ngoyi 11, 61

Maidstone United starting XI

Subs used: Parkinson (Bradbrook 6), Elliott (Parkinson 66), Mooney (Blackman 86)

from Greg Ngoyi at the near post.

Ngoyi looked the most likely match-winner for the visitors and seven minutes after equalising he nearly made it 2-1, only to be thwarted in a one-on-one by Andy Walker.

United responded with a header from Ryan Royston that was cleared off the line by Ryan Ashe, but that was the last that was seen by the home side as an attacking force for half an hour either side of the break.

In first half stoppage time Ngoyi flashed a diving header wide and on 59 minutes the visitors spurned a free header.

They rue the miss just two minutes later as

Maidstone regained the lead with their first coherent attack of the half.

Nugent gathered Tom Parkinson's throw and backed his way into the area in a manner reminiscent of Steve Butler, before pivoting and finding the bottom corner.

It stunned the visitors, who were completely shut out in the final hour, despite a generous four minutes of added time.

United now find themselves just five points from the play-off zone, with a game in hand on all the sides above them, needing to be careful what they wish for.

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Bulls face agonising wait in race for play-off place

RUGBY

■ BY TOM HOWARD

Eastbourne 18 Aylesford Bulls 41

AYLESFORD Bulls' London South East 3 play-off hopes are hanging in the balance despite a convincing victory at Eastbourne.

The victory for Bulls put them in second place and the crucial play-off spot, but the game was their last of the season. The majority of the league, including third-placed Old Reigations, still have one game to play and could take second spot off the Bulls.

Saturday's game did not start well for Aylesford as Eastbourne took the lead with an early penalty. The home side extended their lead with a well-taken drop goal minutes later.

Aylesford regrouped and it was not long before they took the lead with a converted try from Jale Tomasi.

The try didn't open the flood gates for Bulls and it was Eastbourne who looked the better of the two sides. A drop goal and two penalties gave them a 15-7 lead at the break.

Both sides exchanged penalties at the start of the second half, but Aylesford were put under pressure as Tomasi was sent to the bin following a brawl.

Dave Dorton kept the scoreboard ticking over for Aylesford and on the hour the visitors lev-



IN THE BALANCE: Aylesford Bulls powered to a convincing victory but must wait to see if it's enough for a play-off spot

elled the score with a try from Mark Dorman.

The try gave Aylesford momentum and Dorton used his pace to muscle his way through the Eastbourne defence to score twice to give Aylesford the lead. A try from Andy Marshall extended Aylesford's advantage and put the game beyond Eastbourne's reach.

The home side looked a beaten side and

Bulls coasted home to a comfortable victory in the final ten minutes.

All eyes will be on third-placed Old Reigations in two weeks' time as they play their final game of the season at Lewes. A win for Old Reigations would knock Aylesford out of the play-off spot due to a superior points difference.

Picture MARTYN WATSON

FOOTBALL



IN TALKS: Lloyd Hume (right) Alan Walker (left) hope they can keep the squad together for next season

Hume admits club faces challenge to make players stay

STONES joint-manager Lloyd Hume has already begun talks with players regarding their futures at the club.

Maidstone managers Hume and Alan Walker have been given a reduced playing budget from chairman Paul Bowden-Brown to work with next season.

Hume said he is happy with his squad, but is unsure whether he will be able to keep everyone for next season.

He said: "We are starting to talk to players about next season but it is difficult. Ideally I would like to keep everyone, but I do not think that will be viable. We will have to wait and see what happens at the end of the season as we could end up in the play-offs."

Delighted

Hume was delighted with his side's timely run into good form after their 2-1 victory against Wealdstone on Saturday and maintains the play-off positions is this season's target. The three points on Saturday put Maidstone just five points adrift of the top five with a game in hand.

He said: "We seem to be coming into form at the right time. The squad is in a good mood and everyone is confident. However, we must not let that slip. I think looking at it, we would need to win four of our last five games to guarantee a place in the top five."

Club captain Ben Lewis has left the club to join fellow Ryman Premier rivals Margate after two seasons at Maidstone. The central defender was approached by the Thanet club last week, but his move was completed after the transfer deadline and is yet to be rubber stamped by Ryman League officials.

Hume added: "Ben has left the club and I wish him all the best for his future. He is a close personal friend and I hope his situation will be resolved and will be able to play for Margate, who are fighting for their lives."

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See how unstoppable Dover Athletic claimed the Ryman Premier title



TOO STRONG: Maidstone (in red and white) were unable to cope with the power of league leaders Basingstoke

Maidstone taught a lesson in attacking by Basingstoke

RUGBY

Maidstone 8 Basingstoke 61

A DOMINANT second half performance from league leaders Basingstoke ended all hopes of a shock victory for Maidstone.

However, the home side started brightly, taking a shock lead in the opening minute. Chris Tresize charged down a kick from the Basingstoke fly-half, which allowed Steve Matthews to pick up the loose ball and sprint to score a try in the corner.

However, that was as good as it got for Maidstone, as the London 2 South's top club showed their class with a dominant attacking display.

The lead lasted just 15 minutes as

Basingstoke found a gap in the Maidstone defence and opened their account for the afternoon. Five minutes later the visitors scored a second try to take the lead.

A further converted try to Basingstoke just before the break, was answered by a penalty from Tom Searles on the stroke of half-time, but the game was up for Maidstone.

As the second half unfolded, Basingstoke's early anxiety dissipated and they began to run the Maidstone defence ragged.

While it took ten minutes for the first try, thereafter the game became a procession as the fitter and faster Basingstoke unit went through their full repertoire.

Five further tries were scored to complete the afternoon's entertainment, and a solid 61-8 scoreline to the visitors.

FIXTURES

Saturday, April 11

Ryman Premier - Hendon v Maidstone United

Picture STEVE TERREL



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